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KANNAN PAATTU

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KRISHNANJALI

Part Two

TAMIL TEXT AND METRICAL
TRANSLATION IN ENGLISH

By

Sekkizhaar Adi-Podi

T. N. RAMACHANDRAN

Price Rs. 16/-

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Vinay Avasthi Sahib Bhuvan Vani Trust Donations
BHARATI PANCHA-RATNA SERIES No. 3

KRISHNANJALI

Part Two

An English Rendering of Mahakavi Bharati's

KANNAN PAATTU

WITH TEXT, TRANSLATION, NOTES AND
INDEX

By

Sekkizhaar Adi-Podi

T. N. RAMACHANDRAN

Editor, SHIVAJI.

FOREWORD BY

Prof. T. R. KUPPUSWAMY IYER.

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FOREWORD

In Kali-Yuga, a prophet is one who speaks the truth. He need not sooth-say or prognosticate. Enough, he speaks the truth, and that too in as few words as possible. If you agree with this, my theory—which works itself out with amazing results—, you will be counted a prophet. Let truth inform us in our word, thought and deed.

I wrote about T. N. R., unasked, exactly, a decade ago and my friend, the poet immortal, published my article in SHIVAJI (September, 1970). My write-up concluded thus:

“Profundity of thought and lucidity in expression, spoken and written, have gained for him (T. N. R.) a large audience of intellectuals, far and near. With the expansion of horizon, he is bound to widen his sphere of influence.

“Hopes of a father whose constant prayer is that the son should grow into greater heights, those of a teacher whose ardent desire is that the student should outstrip the preceptor are being increasingly realized. May the son and student follow pastures new! May he irrigate wastelands and raise prosperity and wisdom! May fertile soil be his share and may he grow from strength to strength.”

My cup of happiness is full, though, I should say, the lifting hand lifts it rather sadly. My elder brother T. R. Natarajan is not to-day alive to take delight in his subdued way, in the achievements of his son. But then the works of my son are released by T. R. Nataraja Iyer Memorial Library and Publications.

I am no close alumnus of Tamil or Tamil literature. I was and still am a teacher of the deaf-mutes. I learn many things from them. For over forty five years, I have taught English. I have some knowledge of Sanskrit. As kismet would have it. I think to-day, either in English or Urdu. Yet I know my Bharati, particularly his Kannan-Paattu. Who should be thanked for this, but Trilokam?

To me Kannan is an ever-cheerful boy who is either unaware of, or deliberately blind to, the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. He has a flute to divert him in any distress. He is the Music of Life which is called 'Harmony' by the wise ones. He has his playmates ever clinging to him and never wanting to separate. He is a lover of all beings, animate as well as inanimate. I am of the opinion that the beasts and the birds as well as the hills and the forests know more about Kannan than even the humans or the celestials. He for ever sings and plays and dances. He likes Brindaban which is the human heart. His every gesture sustains the rhythm of Life. He knows of one and only duty. It may be described in R. L. Stevenson's words as "the duty of being happy." He may perform a crushing dance on the five-headed monster Kaalinga-Serpent; he may lift the mighty mountain Govardhan; he may dance with the Gopis; he may play with his mates; he may commit petty thefts of treacle and butter; he may suck the life of Poothana away; he may wrestle with Chanoora and Mushtika; he may flee from Jarasandha; he may receive Kuchela of wrinkled face and rumpled dhoti, into his house; he may play on the flute and perform an infinite variety of acts. Remember, that every act of his is a manifestation of happiness. He is for ever happy, happy, happy

It is therefore with some strain, I have to conceive him as a serious preceptor. Did not Bharati himself entertain a similar view ?

"how can he, such as he is,
Ever to know of aught of Truth that is
Unknown, aye, even to tapaswis great ?"

— (Kannan — *My Sad - Guru.*)

But there is no greater Guru than Kannan. "Gnothi seauton" (know thy self) he begins his teaching thus and in these two words is contained a world of wisdom. "Ninnai Nanru Maruvuka". This results in the dawn of Knowledge. This dawn is the harbinger of eternal light. Self-Knowledge is John the Baptist who heralds the advent of the Messiah. Know Thy Self and be baptised.

The Gita is the Bible among books. Its approach is out and out serious. The divine flippancy, the happy equivocation, the gay irresponsibility, the petty fibs galore — these that constitute apparently, the very flesh and marrow of the tenth book of *Srimad Bhagawatam* are all tapu here. Poor Arjuna, who was all along so sure of Kannan's nature and qualities, felt the ground under him giving way when he beheld in Kannan what mortal eyes have not witnessed. Can a mere Nara comprehend Narayana even with the supernatural eyes lent to him on purpose? Cries Arjuna :

damstrakaralani ca te mukham
drstvai va kalanalasangnibhani
dis'o najane na labhe ca sarma
prasida devesa jagannivasa

"When I see Thy mouths terrible with their tusks, like Time's devouring flames, I lose sense of the directions and find no peace. Be gracious, O Lord of gods, Refuge of the worlds !"

— *Tr. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan.*

And Dr. S. Radhakrishnan says :

"The vision is not a myth or a legend but spiritual experience. In the history of religious experience, we have a number of such visions. The transfiguration of Jesus, the vision of Saul on the Damascus Road, Constantine's vision of the Cross bearing the motto "In this sign, conquer," Joan of Arc's visions are experiences akin to the vision of Arjuna."

Well ... I said, the Gita is a serious work. The commentaries on it are even more serious. So how is the commoner ever to come by a knowledge of it? It is here Bharati plays his role, as the poet and the preceptor, as the lover and the loved, as the learner as well as the teacher. The seriousness of the Gita has its impact on Bharati too. He too suddenly becomes unintelligible when he bursts out thus :

"Me he is and also other than me
Which is not me ; yet 's he of me and them

And, from me and these is he different ;
He is something mystic and mysterious,
The illusive Kannan ”

— (*Kannan — My Chela*)

This unintelligible style, though, characteristically Bharatian, does not persist. The language gains clarity and, as it were with its hind-light, throws a pencil of rays on the obscure beginnings. As the lines move on and on, ‘kindly light’ does its work and the common reader gains knowledge in greater and richer measure.

I only err on the right side when I say that Kannan - Paattu is the Tamil Gita, made intelligible to the common reader.

Now to a knotty question This, as you may anticipate, is the one touching the Naayaka — Naayika bhava. This question has never bothered me, even as it never bothered the ancients. The Seer-Poets of India were never obsessed with the problem of sex. To them, profanity was a non - entity. Sex, at its best, was after all one of the sixteen **Kalas** that constitute Life.

The sculptored figures on some of the temple gopuras, the lavish frescoes, the liberal tributes to bodily charm and beauty in Tamil and Sanskrit literatures are proof positive of the fact that Victorian prudery was something unknown to them. The hymns of the great limn beauty, feature by feature. Shankara and Maanickavachaka indulge in descriptions which we may not be able to stomach. When virgin Aandaal exclaimed that on the sight of her beloved Kannan, she would pluck by the root her breast and stab him therewith, the ancients were not shocked. Instesad, rapturous tears flowed down their cheeks. With our present-day ‘morals’ we cannot touch with a pair of tongs, the Old Testament. Christopher Isherwood informs us that the language of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna was sometimes sharply slangish.

Bharati, it should not be forgotten comes in the line of Aalzhwaars and Nayanmaar, Sukha Bhagawan, Jaya Deva and Lila Sukha.

The two volumes of 'Krishnanjali' contain thirty-five gems of hymns. The Tamil originals are alive with the live-cells of Bharati's heart, which also lies transplanted into the English version with the unerring skill of a master-surgeon. 'Bharati - Bhakti' has sustained the devotee in a difficult and hazardous task. Krishnanjali has been approached with veneration and trepidation. Useful introductory remarks and notes adorn the work. These are a blessing to the novice and a treat to the scholar.

I have heard TNR praise Parimelazhakar, the great commentator of the Kural. He used to say that the beauty of Valluvar's distichs would have been substantially lost, if Parimelazhakar had not written his radiant commentary. I now begin to feel the force of this observation of T. N. R., who is Bharati's Parimelazhakar. Many facilely think that they can understand Bharati, all by themselves. Alas, they are much mistaken. The interpretations and notes provided by the translator, present to us a Bharati hitherto unknown to most of us. This perhaps is one of the reasons which tempted Dr. Prema Nandakumar to say in her Foreword to Vinaayakar Naan Mani Maalai, thus : 'Much care and study has preceded the translation of Vinaayakar Naan Mani Maalai and the lover of Bharatiana is revealed at each turn. I am sure others will profit by reading this translation as much as I have profited. " In two sentences, sweet and short, the learned Doctor has sized up the greatness of T. N. R.

The approach of the translator is as critical as it is original and as revelatory as it is laudatory and the remarks and notes of the translator are as luminous as they are voluminous. They are not mere baby-fat to be shed after a time, but the very bones and marrows of the work. A keen acumen, an uncanny memory, an immense capacity for assimilation and absorption have been brought to bear upon the work to which I am privileged to write this foreword.

When my son sent me "The Song of the Kuyil", I was thrilled to the very cockles of my heart to go through it. I read and re-read the reputed Professor's Foreword. Of T. N. R., Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar says: "His memory is sharp and uncanny; it is almost a computer memory which registers poetic and verbal parallels from the world's ends with something akin to automatic efficiency." Of the translation-language of TNR, the great Doctor says that it "inevitably reveals the influence of this eclectic and gorgeous and sumptuous diet." Many of the remarks of appreciation of the venerable doyen of literature have long been mine.

Now Krishnanjali is before you. To how many minds, I ask, will this title "KRISHNANJALI" suggest itself as a fitting translation of **Kannan-Paattu**? To a handful, peradventure; but of them Trilokam would be one. To Tamils well-acquainted with English, **Krishnanjali** will prove a boon; to non-Tamils who have a command over English, it will be a blessing. Seats of learning endowed with Chairs for Tamil, I hope, will make the best use of T. N. R.'s translations,

T. N. R. has single-handedly achieved what is possible of achievement only by a board of scholars. I do not see T. N. R., now as my son only. I see him as Trilokam himself.

Long live Triloka-T. N. R. as glorious and holy Sekkizhaar Adi-Podi.

Hyderabad
6-11-80.

T. R. Kuppuswamy Iyer,
U. N. Fellow.

On Translation and TNR

Prof. K. G. Seshadri.

Translation is said to be the Cinderella of the arts. As in the fairy tale, translation, a late starter has come into more than its own. Though not exactly the Queen of arts, it has become a very popular and powerful medium for communication of ideas. It is through translations that universal integration is possible.

If the translation is from any language into English, the foremost international language, the same is likely to reach a wider range of readers. It can then be translated into the respective mother-tongues of other nations. In fact, the efflorescence of English literature in the Elizabethan era was partly due to the great spurt in translation like North's translation of Amyot's French translation of Plutarch's "Lives" in the original Greek, Florie's Montaigne and a host of other translations of the Greek and Latin classics into English by scholar-translators.

But the work of translation bristles with many built-in difficulties, especially if the work translated happens to be poetic in form. Poetry, as Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar has observed, is by its very nature untranslatable. It may be easier to bring a poem from a foreign language into one's own mother-tongue. The reverse process i.e., to translate into English from the mother-tongue, especially a great language like Tamil, with its richness of **dhwani**, literary flavour, and rhythmic variety and splendour, is bound to present even to wary translators very many difficulties. More so, if the Tamil bard is one like Bharati (if there can be one like him!). Bharati's Tamil is energizing, grand, mystical and deceptively simple. As a bard and mystic his conquest is great—if not vast like Tagore's or Sri Aurobindo's—, though he himself would say in his humble way that he but beheld a single root of the Vedantic Tree.

If in spite of all hurdles, difficulties and natural bars, a writer has succeeded in doing justice to his work of translating Bharati into English, he deserves no mean accolade. Shri T. N. R. has already acquitted himself creditably in his translation of Bharati's **Kuyil Paattu**, so justly acclaimed by Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar : "But **Kuyil Paattu**, is a class apart, for it often lures the translator only to land him in the narrows of conspicuous failure. But T. N. R. has both dared and safely came through the fascinating and perilous ordeal."

After this signal success, no wonder the facile and confident pen of T. N. R., has turned to his favourite Bard's other works. The present translation of **Kannan Paattu** as **Krishnanjali** shows the same rare qualities of bi-lingual erudition, eclectic taste, thorough familiarity with the world's great literatures, exegetical acumen, profound understanding of Saiva Siddhanta as well as Shankara Vedanta, and the same dedication to the task that were so amply revealed in his **Kuyil Paattu** translation.

A few words about the translator. It is perhaps a little difficult to present a true picture of a tower if you happen to stand too close to its base and look up. The present writer's difficulty is just the same. I happen to know T. N. R. for over three lustrums now, and I can bear happy witness to this bibliognost's massive scholarship eclectic tastes, passionate bibliolatriy and insatiable bibliophilism. His library, acquired at considerable sacrifice, is the envy of professors like me. I have heard the late - lamented poet Triloka - Sitaram say : "If Tamizhakam can produce half - a - dozen TNRs, the writers and poets can surely find their Paradise here, on earth itself, firmly established."

There is no department of literature in which T. N. R. is not interested. He is an acknowledged cognoscente in Saiva Siddhanta and Tamil literature, steeped in Kamban and Villi, Valluvar and the Sangam poets; a keen debater in Tamil Pattimanrams, a symposiarch of many symposia, and an eagerly sought - after speaker in English associations in

colleges and other literary platforms. a discourser on the Ramayana and the Maha-Bharata, and above all a humble devotee of St. Sekkizhaar, rapturously following the **Oduvaars** through all the night, when the latter go round the sacred streets of holy towns, singing the Tamil Thirumurai. T N R is one of those few who prefer Milton to Shakespeare and Sekkizhaar to Kamban. He venerates Bharati, as Dr. K. R. S. Iyengar puts it, 'this side of idolatry.' His mentor was the great Triloka-Sitaram, the greatest metaphysical poet in Tamil, after Bharati. The inspiration and the influence of Trilokam over T. N. R. is something remarkable. ... He is indeed the, spiritual son and heir of the great poet.

It may appear to some lovers of English presumptuous if I compare the long and arduous preparation of T. N. R., to that of the great John Milton who consciously set out to prepare himself for his great vocation in life. 'Long choosing and beginning late', T. N. R. deliberately waited till he had by constant practice and application, brought himself upto the point whence he could confidently launch forth into his great work of "Translation-Bharati "

கூட்டிப் பெருக்கிக் கழித்து வகுத்தும் கணக்கறியாப்
பாட்டிற் படுதுய ராயினவேதும் பகுத்தறியாது
ஏட்டிற் பெருக்கி எழுதிய வெல்லாம் இலக்கியமாய்
போட்டு வைப் போமிது போதுமி தேநாம் புரிதவமே.

["What tho' we add, multiply, subtract or divide

The sum remains ; analysis of agony

Let us ostracise and move our finger in writing;

Let this literature be ; this will suffice and this our
tapas is.]

- T. N. R.

These immortal lines of Trilokam, indeed the literary manifesto of the poet-hero, were actually the raison d'etre of T. N. R.'s gestatory years.

The periodical meetings of Triloka-Sitaram's Deva Sabha, an irregular White Company of assorted writers, thinkers, officials, professors, businessmen and doctors, provided the occasion for the incubation and efflorescence, if such a mixed metaphor can be pardoned, of the genius of T. N. Ramachandran. Alas, the White Company has since been disbanded, with the untimely death of the Master T. L. S. in August 1973.

T. N. R., 'gathered gear' in R. L. Stevenson's rich phrase, all these preparatory years. Even the frequent picaresque peregrinations of the White Company in T. N. R.'s Fiat across the length and breadth of the districts of Thanjavur and Trichy in the late sixties and early seventies, with the rich clash of minds and 'gleans like the flashing of a shield', the endless hours of conversational thrust and parry, now serious, now humorous, finally ending up for the day in some decent place of rest for "cards, conversation and cold supper" (in Lamb's classic phrase) contributed to the flowering of his latent talents. The achievement of this bus-operator-turned-lawyer-turned writer translator may come as a delightful surprise to all lovers of Bharati in the context of the great Bard's coming centenary in 1982, but not so to the present writer. To him, this work is but the natural culmination of years of patient study, single-minded devotion and dedication to what T.N.R. considers to be his duty, viz, to bring Bharati and his message to the rest of the world through an adequate English translation made enjoyable with notes and commentary, meant to reveal Bharati in his true light. In this, I am sure, scholars of English and Tamil literature will agree with me, that the translator has done justice to his chosen task.

May T. N. R. continue in his endeavour and complete his work so that the name of the greatest Tamil poet of the 20th century, shall resound from the hearts and lips of lovers of literature throughout the world.

"TRANSLATION — KANNAN PAATTU"

Vinay Avasthi Sahib Bhawan Varanasi Trust Donation

Three and twenty are the poems which constitute the corpus of Kannan Paattu. There are also twelve other pieces on Kannan by Bharati, which are not included in the section known as Kannan Paattu. In my judgment all the thirty-five constitute Kannan Paattu. In part one of Krishnanjali, comprising in all eight poems, is included one of these twelve and part two contains the remaining sixteen poems as well as the other eleven.

The Irish poet Dr. James H Cousins appears to be the first among the foreigners to acknowledge the genius of Bharati's Muse. It was very noble of him to have rendered in English verse a few of Bharati's poems. Two of them are still extant notwithstanding the proverbial indifference of the Tamils.

The translation of Dr. J. H. Cousins, of the poem beginning with the words "Suttum Vizhich Sudar" is included in "The Voice of a Poet", an anthology of Bharati's poems in English verse by various eminent hands. This is a publication of Bharati Tamil Sangam, Calcutta.

Bharati the son of a polyglot nation and himself a linguist in his own right, ached for self-expression in more languages than one. Fascinated by the English of Bharati, Prof. P. Mahadevan says: "Pride of place should be given to Bharati's renderings in English of a few of his own poems. Some of them are wonderfully compact verse-forms not merely without a flaw, but with a polished brilliance which it is a joy to contemplate. Others are in free-verse or prose-poetry and offer us models of translation in which Bharati steers clear of the extremes of pedantic metaphrase and licentious paraphrase."

Bharati has given us two of his Kannan Paattu in English. There is no doubt that "Krishna — My Mother" is a translation. But the same cannot be said of "In Each Other's Arms" which is said to be a translation of the Tamil poem

beginning with the words "Paayu Moli Nee Enakku". The English poem sounds original, sixteen annas in the rupee. At any rate the matter needs further probing.

It is heartening to note that Bharati was accorded due recognition by French as well as English scholars. In his verse-epistle to the zamindar of Ettainapuram, he says : " The poets of the far-famed France and others, as well as the renowned King of English bards greatly extol my poems and these, in loving admiration have translated them. "

It is a misfortune that we have lost these pearls. Is it mere misfortune ? Would a Bengali allow this to happen to Tagore? No. We will thunder our 'No' from the roof-top. The immensity of our supine indifference is only matched by our unexampled callousness. No wonder, Dr G. U. Pope burst out thus : " Tamil scholarship is a direct road to poverty ".

[Sorry for the digression ; but this is called for. Ten years, — mark —, ten years ahead of the birth-centenary of Tagore, the Bengalis took up their work. What are we doing ? Oh my hoary Tamil-Nadu ! Not even can Kannan save you !]

We are in humble agreement with Prof. P. Mahadevan who says : " Bharati's admirers must ever regret that he did not write more extensively in English. " Bharati passed away on 11 September 1921. For nearly three decades nothing worth while appears to have been done by the English-knowing scholars of Tamil to transcreate Bharati in English.

In 1950 Hephzibah Jesudasan published in Chera country (Trivandrum) " The Song of the Cuckoo and other poems, " in English verse. In this volume are included a pentad of Kannan Paattu, they being (1) Chinnanji chiru kiliye (2) Paayu Moli Nee Enakku (3) Thoondir Puzhuvinaip Pol (4) Aasai Mukam Maranthu Pocche and (5) Kanavenna Kanave. Of Mrs. Jesudasan's achievement we have already spoken in our Bharati - Pancharatna Series No 2 We are told that she was only twenty - four years old when she published her significant work.

In 1957, Prof. P. Mahadevan published his "Subramania Bharati — Patriot and Poet — A Memoir". His wonderful work contains a quartet of Kannan Paattu. They are (1) Ponnnavir Meni Subhatthirai (2) Chinnanaj Chiru Kiliye (3) Neram Mikunthathinnam and (4) Kaakkaich Chirakinile. It is very unfortunate that the great Professor did not choose to translate the whole of Kannan Paattu.

In 1958 Dr. Prema Nandakumar published her "Bharati in English Verse". She was then S. Prema B. A. (Hons), Research Student in English, Andhra University, Waltair. The lovers of Bharati were thrilled to go through this work from Andhra, by a lass hardly nineteen years old. Dr. Prema is second to none, in her devotion to Bharati. Thamizhakam will gratefully remember her for her four wondrous works on Bharati. (1) Kaakkaich Chirakinile (2) Chinnanaj Chiru Kiliye (3) Thoondir Puzhuvinaip Pol (4) Suttum Vizhich Chudarthaan (5) Thanjam Ulakinil and (6) Ninnaich Charan Adainthane form the hexad of the Doctor's Krishnanjali.

The third enlarged edition of "The Voice of a poet" was released by Bharati Tamil Sangam, Calcutta in 1975. This anthology contains translations of 45 poems of Bharati. Of these twelve belong to Kannan Paattu. Hereinbelow is furnished the list of poems and names of translators.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (1) Suttum Vizhich Chudar ... | Dr. J. H. Cousins. |
| (2) Thoondir Puzhuvinei ... | Prof. A. Srinivasa Raghavan |
| (3) Kannan Mana Nilayei ... | Do |
| (4) Paayu Moli (5 stanzas only) ... | Do. |
| (5) Mannar Kulatthinidai ... | Do. |
| (6) Theertthak Karaiyinile .. | Do. |
| (7) Boomikku Enai ... | Do. |
| (8) Kooli Mihak ketpaar ... | Prof. K. Swaminathan. |
| (9) Maalai Pozhuthil ... | Sri P. N. Appuswamy. |
| (10) Kanavenna Kanave ... | Do. |
| (11) Enkirunthu Vanthatho ... | Do. |
| (12) Neram Mihuntha ... | Sri S Rangaswami. |

Hats off to the Tamils of Bengal.

Sri A. Duraiswamy Pillai, as an exercise in expiation brought out his "Bharathi's poems — Kannan and Kuyil Paattu" in 1966, as an 'NCBH' publication. It should be said to the credit of Mr. Pillai that he was the first to render all the twenty - three poems of Kannan Paattu in English prose and vers libre. We have already written about Mr. Pillai in our "Bharati - Pancharatna Series No. 2."

Mr. A. John Louis (Ezhilan), Chief Educational Officer, Mahe, has translated a few of Bharati's poems. Through Prof. M. S. Nadar I was able to get this work which is yet to be published. Ezhilan is a good translator and his contributions merit better publicity

Prof. K. G. Seshadri, Principal, Govt. Arts College, Karur, is now engaged in translating Bharati. He has given us in English a Bharati-Panchakam. One in this pentad is a translation of "Nandalaala." Prof. K. G. S., the Amaryllis of the White Company, ere long, it is hoped, will put forth more blossoms "fragrant as the ruddy flame."

A word about translation in general and my translation in particular :

Each language is endowed with a peculiar genius, native to that language. In this sense, no two languages are equal. Classical Greek or celestial Sanskrit cannot mirror the shades of Swahili. The language of the Kuravas (nomadic gypsies) must have idioms unknown to French or German. It is good to remember this basic truth. In a translation therefore, what can be achieved is only approximation. Anyone who hyper-enthusiastically overdoes will meet with his Quince who will greet him thus :

'Bless thee, Bottom ! bless thee ! thou art translated.'
(*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 3, 1, 121)

I am aware that the energy, the intensity, the easy valiancy, the expressed integrity and the sustained undercurrent of thought-content of Bharati's Tamil can be enjoyed only in the original. In his Foreword to my translation of Kuyil-

Paattu, Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar says: "Much of the witchery of music and phrasing, the spiralling **dhwani** will doubtless go..." True; very true. But equally true is the need for translation which cannot be supplanted by any number of learned commentaries or critical interpretations. Even a bad, literal translation in my view, may be superior to an intelligent paraphrasing or a learned commentary. For, the translator leans on the original; all else on him that does the writing.

When all is said and done, what is possible is a translated whole which is not at all tantamount to a 'total translation.' The difficulty is one of inherence which will persist to the bitter end

Nearness, semblance approximation — these alone can be achieved even by a competent and earnest translator.

A good drilling in the language of the original as well as the language that receives the original is a 'must' for any translator. He must have a well-strung bow and a quiver of many arrows. However he need not draw to his full strength, lest his arrow should over-shoot. A certain sobriety should inform his judgment. To these, must be added a healthy self-confidence. Even then the wished-for 'transfer' may not take place. But, the translation, I daresay is bound to provide the reader with a sure foothold for comprehension.

Translation, I have learnt, is a discipline. I like it. In more ways than one, it reveals me to myself. It humbles me; (and humility is my perennial need); it punctures my ego; it chastens me and ultimately fulfils me. No wonder, Goethe wrote to Carlyle to say: "Say what one will of its inadequacy, translation remains one of the most important worthwhile concerns in the totality of world affairs."

My happiest moment in my translation - work is, when I, on a sudden remember a line, a phrase or even a word of a Shakespeare or a Milton, who had for me already done the translation. The original, more often than not, nettles me; I wrestle with it; I move inch by inch to the hill-top only to

turn into a Sisyphus ; I am undone. Suddenly I remember a familiar voice. It answers my SOS. The ensuing delight is ineffable.

I am not very old ; but I have seen a bit of life. I have learnt from many. I can say with aplomb that Master Translation is a great teacher. He has much to teach, if you care to listen. I fancy, I am devoted to my Master. Why not ?

Regarding Krishnanjali, I have not much to say. In the main it is in blank - verse. And blank - verse is verse only to the eye. For a change I have composed a Shakesperian sonnet. Rhyming has also been resorted to in one or two instances. For the sake of terseness I have had resort to a unit of six syllables only per line in one or two instances. Where the occasion warranted tetrametre sans rime has also been pressed into service. There is also a piece in what I will call, "Englishaandhadi" (Anaphoretic verse). Thus have I endeavoured to create an illusion of variety. I believe in a literal rendering. Occasional departure from this norm can be detected.

Well, Bharati is a creature of the elements, who lives in the rainbow and plays in the clouds. Sweetest Bharati is "Fancy's Child". His numbers flow a harmonious stream.

Nor sequent centuries could hit

Orbit and sum o' Bharati's wit.

I am alive to the shortcomings of my translation. I translate Bharati, because I cannot help it. That's all.

On 11-2-80 I commenced my translation of Kannan - Paattu. By the grace of Kannan, it came to a close on 6-3-80. The twelve poems were done sometime later.

According to my son Chiranjivi Suresh, my translations can do no body any good sans my Notes. I too like to provide my reader with Notes. My Notes to Kuyil Paattu were not unwelcome. However the problem with me is plenty ; not paucity. My translation serves as a "sumai - thaanki" (a la cromlech) for my Notes. But believe me, my reader, when I say that my translations as well as my views and notes are my - love - for - Bharati made visible.

18-10-1980

Sskktzhaar Adi. Podi.

GRACIAS

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*To Prof. T. R. Kuppuswamy Iyer the translator offers his
myriad namaskars.*

**This Volume is dedicated to Srimati KALYANI
the wife of the translator, who
spared her navaratna to see the
PANCHARATNA in print.**

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OVERTURE

Bharati was possessed of a knowledge which "schools have never known". He was blessed with a panoramic dharsan of Krishna - Gnosis thanks to which, in a Hanuman - like leap he found himself on the peak of the "Parama - Dharma Mount". From there he played his **Ghoshapati**, the lyre of a thousand strings and peopled his world with hymn and song and solemn strain. Some of his imitators, alas, have ended up as harpers of a single monotonous string.

Of himself, Bharati says :

" There were many mystics, aye, before me,
I too am of their line, in this country."

While others were wearily plodding with no ostensible hope of any gain, Bharati, on a sudden, "broke through to the Oneness."

He says :

" This world is one.

Male, female, mortal, immortal,

snake, bird, air, sea,

life, death — everything is one.

The sun, the wall, bee, waterfall is one

... ..

Vedas, sea-fish, storm, jasmine blossoms—these are the varied forms of the same.

All that are, are one thing, One

The name of this 'one' is 'self' ,

'Self' is God

'Self' is ambrosial, immortal "

— Tr.Dr. Prema Nandakumar.

This knowledge liberates and the liberated poet sang of this freedom in a thousand ways.

Bharati is no mourner like Swedenborg. Hilarity is the hall - mark of his spirit. His prose writings are an unfailing remedy for the malady of hypochondria. Truly he was, is and will be the Master of Revels for the Tamil race.

The matter - of - fact world ever anxious to label everything called Bharati a mad man. Indeed he was mad. His passion was so exuberant, his imagination so overflowing that even a casual reader of Bharati can catch glimpses of the 'fine frenzy' of his divine anubhava in all his songs celestial. He was as much of his tribesmen as he was out of them " He addressed his thoughts out of a certain height, presupposing the intelligence " of his reader. His broad humanity beyonded all sectional lines.

Bharati's heart was in unison with his time and country. Before Bharati, there was no literature for the Tamil millions. Tamil literature was the exclusive domain of pundits who went about mouthing highfalutin bombast to little purpose, all the while delighting in their capacity for learned and laboured abracadabra. Bharati redeemed Tamil from punditry and varlety. He absorbed light wherever it radiated and out came his words with thunder winged with red lightning. The tradition - bound and the custom - shrunk quaked before his iridescent spicula, the piercing pins of light.

We have been repeatedly saying that the religion of Bharati is Love. He has outloved Love itself. An ever-present humaneness co-ordinates all his faculties. He is wise without assertion, and is strong as Nature is strong. His spaciousness is that of space itself. He is ever-cheerful.

" How many billions are the joys Thou hast
Deigned to create, O Lord, O Lord, O Lord ! "

he sings in sheer ecstacy. His cheerfulness is truly Shakespearian. His is the running laughter of a pebbled and pellucid stream.

He hitches his Pegasus to the stars and revels in sidereal wonder and splendour. However, he is the son of Mother-Earth and willingly consents to dismount his horse, if need should arise. He loves virtue, purely for its grace. He sets the highest value on freedom : freedom from want : freedom from fear ; freedom from death. His name suggests joy and emancipation.

Bharati is his own Kannan, the eternal lover, and myriads are his Gopis who flock to him in unselfish joy. These are ever-prepared to throw their work on hand and rush to burn incense at his altar. Bharati, be it known, holds an eternal communion with the Bharati in us. The wish-yielding **Chintamani** stone cannot produce another Chintamani. But Bharati creates thousands of Bharati every day.

Dr. K. R. S. Iyengar says :

“ Panchali and the Kuyil : What a contrasting concatenation ! Perhaps, one was ‘thesis’, the other was ‘antithesis’ — and was ‘Kannan Paattu’ (1917) to be the ‘synthesis’ or the transcendence ? ”

We salute you, Poet-Seer for this grand revelation

Kannan Paattu is the anthem of the individual soul wooing merger with the Universal Soul. It is a prayer for the wiping of units, addressed to the Grand Unity. It is a mystic formula to usher the mystic union in which the antithesis of ‘lover’ and ‘beloved’ is resolved. It is a crucifixion adventing ascension.

The anthology of Kannan Paattu, to borrow the words of Dr. K. R. S. Iyengar (appearing in a different context) “ is a superb embodiment of the lyra mystica, and a spiritual testament for all time ”.

Of all poets known to us, Rumi is the one poet whose language is Bharatian. His “ Love, The Hierophant ” is Kannan Paattu in a nut-shell.

“Tis heart-ache lays the lover's passion bare:

No sickness with heart-sickness may compare.

Love is a malady apart, the sign

And astrolabe of mysterious Divine.

Whether of heavenly mould or earthly cast,

Love still doth lead us Yonder at the last,

Reason, explaining Love, can naught but flounder

Like ass in mire : Love is Love's own expounder.

Does not the sun himself the sun declare ?

Behold him ! All the proof thou seek'st is there. ”

Tr. R. A. Nicholson.

Well, let us conclude our overture with this trumpet note.

“One of the missouriums and mastodons of literature”,
Bharati is not to be measured by whole colleges of ordinary
scholars.

12-11-80.

Sekkizhaar Adi- Podi

... who says the lover's passion that
... and heart-aches and sorrows
... mainly from the sign
... of the love of the lover
... the heavenly world or earthly earth
... both lead us to the same end
... passion love, can reach the founder
... in time; love is love's own exponent
... the son himself the son himself
... All the world then seems to be
... R. A. Mahajan
... the founder of the movement
... the founder of the movement
... the founder of the movement

... R. A. Mahajan

மகா கவி நாரதீயார் அருளிய
கண்ணன் பாட்டு

பாகம் — 2

KRISHNANJALI

PART TWO

கண்ணம்மா—என் குழந்தை

சின்னஞ் சிறுகிளியே—கண்ணம்மா !

செல்வக் களஞ்சியமே !

என்னைக் கலிதீர்த்தே—உலகில்

ஏற்றம் புரியவந்தாய் !

பிள்ளைக் கனியமுதே—கண்ணம்மா !

பேசும் பொற் சித்திரமே !

அள்ளி யணைத்திடவே—என்முன்னே

ஆடி வருந் தேனே !

ஓடி வருகையிலே—கண்ணம்மா !

உள்ளங் குளிருதடி ;

ஆடித்திரிதல் கண்டால்—உன்னைப்போய்

ஆவி தழுவுதடி.

உச்சி தனைமுகந்தால்—கருவம்

ஓங்கி வளருதடி ;

மெச்சி யுணையூரார்—புகழ்ந்தால்

மேனி சிலிர்க்குதடி.

கன்னத்தில் முத்தமிட்டால்—உள்ளந்தான்

கள்வெறி கொள்ளுதடி ;

உன்னைத் தழுவிடிலோ—கண்ணம்மா

உன்மத்த மாகுதடி ;

சற்றுன் முகஞ்சிவந்தால்—மனது

சஞ்சல மாகுதடி ;

நெற்றி சுருங்கக் கண்டால்—எனக்கு

நெஞ்சம் பதைக்குதடி.

Kannamma—My Child

“We know of no blessing so great as the begetting of children that are endowed with understanding.”

— Kural 61, Tr. V. V. S. Iyer.

Pretty little parakeet, Kannamma !
El Dorado true and Cornucopia !
Thou hast come, aye, to chase Kali away
And uplift me to the peak of glory.

5. Child of nectar, fruitage ambrosial,
Speaking portrait of gold, Oh Kannamma !
O flowing stream of honey, as you come
Dancing I leap t' hold thee in soft embrace.

10. As you frisk and run, my dear Kannamma
Cool gales in my bosom waft me thrilling ;
When I behold thee romp and dance in joy
My very life leaps forth to cincture thee.

15. The fragrance of thy crown when I inhale
My pride and joy meteoric soareth ;
If townsfolk on thee shower encomia
Thrilled is, aye, every pore of my body.

20. When I, aye, a kiss on thy cheek imprint
My heart with wine is intoxicated ;
When in loving embrace I hold thee
Kannamma ! I am atop frenzy's peak.

Should even a little, your face turn red
My mind is rocked sore by grief and worry ;
Should I but behold thy temple contort
My heart doth flutter in agony great.

உன்கண்ணில் நீர்வழிந்தால்—என்னெஞ்சில்
உதிரங் கொட்டுதல் ;
என் கண்ணின் பாவையன்றோ ? - கண்ணம்மா !
என்னுயிர் நின்னதன்றோ ?

சொல்லு மழலையிலே—கண்ணம்மா
துன்பங்கள் தீர்த்திடுவாய் ;
முல்லைச் சிரிப்பாலே—எனது
மூர்க்கந் தவிர்த்திடுவாய்.

இன்பக் கதைகளெல்லாம்—உன்னைப்போல்
ஏடுகள் சொல்வதுண்டோ ?
அன்பு தருவதிலே—உனைநேர்
ஆகுமொர் தெய்வமுண்டோ ?

மார்பி லணிவதற்கே—உன்னைப்போல்
வைர மணிகளுண்டோ ?
சீர் பெற்று வாழ்வதற்கே—உன்னைப்போல்
செல்வம் பிறிதுமுண்டோ ?

Introductory Remarks

Senaca's story about Cornelia is unforgettable. Cornelia, daughter of Scipio Africanus and wife of Sempronius Gracchus was visited by a lady who displayed her jewels and asked Cornelia about hers. Thereupon Cornelia kept her in talk till her children came from school, "and these" said she "are my jewels".

A child, a good child is a boon of boons. Orbitude is a nuisance, and orbity is much worse. A nulli - para finds no welcome anywhere.

The Lord is a lover of children. Says the New Testament : "It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones." (Luke, xvii, 2.)

Says the Christ : "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of God." (Luke, xviii, 16,)

Should ever tears thy lovely eyes suffuse
 Ruddy drops from my heart do pour profuse;
 Thou art the pupil of my eye, Kannamma!
 Mine is not my life, it is but thine own.

By your honey-sweet lisping, Kannamma!
 You rid me for e'er, my miseries all;
 When like jasmine you do laugh, Kannamma!
 Slain indeed, is the brute in me, for e'er.

Could ever books and tomes relate to me
 Stories sweet as those, that thou me tellest?

And is there a deity that can match thee
 In love and grace, aye, illimitable?

To adorn my bosom, O Kannamma!
 No necklace of diamonds, save but thee;
 To flourish in boundless prosperity
 Riches there are none, but thou alone art.

Children are the cherubs and seraphs of the earth. According to Swinburne, "Where children are not, heaven is not."

The Gods of Bharat love to get born. So it is, we think, Gibran says: "Your children are not your children. They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself."

"The touch of children is the delight of the body: the delight of the ear is the hearing of their speech" says Thiruvalluvar.

'Pillai-th-Tamizh' is a prabhanda peculiar to the genius of the Tamils. This part of literature celebrates the exploits of deities and devotees, as children.

Kannan the child, is the darling of every Hindu. As a child he is enshrined for our adoration in the hymns of Periyaazhwaar. V. V. S. Iyer says that Bharati was steeped in the spirit of the great Aazhwaar.

Asks Adi Veera Rama Pandian : "Can even the Gnaanis (Wise Ones) beyond the love of children ?" The rhapsodies of Sukha Muni touching the lilas of Kannan, form an ivory peak of experienced bliss, in Bhagawatam. We have every reason to believe that Bharati has eke drunk deep Sevvai Sooduvaar, the author of Tamil Bhagawatam.

Notes

Line 3: KALI.

Kali-yuga is the present Iron-Age. The reader may consult with advantage the note under Krita-Yuga, appearing at page 40, The Garland Wrought of Fourfold Gems on Vinaayaka, Bharati-Pancharatna Series No. 1.

Dr. K R. S Iyengar says : "In his paper on 'Guru Nanak's Times', Captain Bhag Singh brings together a number of passages from Nanak's songs, which, cumulatively, build up a harrowing image of that 'Kali Age', that Age of darkness and despotism. Among the more important passages are :

In the Kali, flaming passion is the chariot, with falsehood as its charioteer. (Asa, 470)

Women have been cunning, and men cruel. Both have lost all sense of self-culture, self-control, self-respect and self-help. They do what they should avoid. (Sarang 1243)

They read namaz but devout men ; those who wear the sacred thread round their necks, carry the dagger. (Asa, 471)

This Age is like a drawn knife, with Kings as butchers. And righteousness has taken wings. In this dark night of utter falsehood, the Moon of Truth is not visible. (Majh, 145)

The distinguishing feature of the Kali Age is that whoever is tyrannical is approved. (Ramkali, 902)

The master is humbled while the servant has nothing to fear. The master is chained and dies at the hands of his own servant. (Ramkali, 902)

Guru Nanak, A Homage, Introduction, p xxi

Lines 5-6 : Child of nectar ... Oh Kannamma !

Bharati mixes all possible and impossible metaphors to
conjure up a figure which is beyond metaphors.
Vinay Avasthi Sahib Bhuvan Vani Trust Donations

Lines 19-20 : When in peak :

Cf. "Great is the joy of the mother when a (male) child is born unto her : but greater far is her delight, when she heareth him called worthy." *The Kural*, 69. Tr. V. V. S. Iyer.

Lines 21-24 : Should even great :

Periyavaachaan Pillai says that Nandagopa, the foster-father of Kannan, was ever equipped with a sharp blazing javelin to spear even an ant that durst run under the cradle of child Krishna. This non-violent and peace-loving patriarch would not even, formerly, tread a bed of green grass thinking that he should not cause them any harm. But after the birth of Kannan, he became in Mother Aandaal's words, a "Koor vel kodum thozhilan".

Line 31 : When laugh :

Cf (1) "As climbing jasmine pure."

Wordsworth, Elegiac Stanzas.

(2) "One laugh of a child will make the holiest day more sacred still."

— R. G. Ingersoll.

Lines 33-34 : Could ever tellest ?

Children are poems themselves.

Cf. "Ye are better than all the ballads

That ever were sung or said ;

For ye are living poems

And all the rest are dead."

Longfellow, Children, st. 9.

Line 40 : Riches alone art :

Cf. "Children are poor men's riches."

Thomas Fuller, Gnomologia, No. 1094.

தீராத விளையாட்டுப் பிள்ளை

தீராத விளையாட்டுப் பிள்ளை—கண்ணன்

தெருவிலே பெண்களுக் கோயாத தொல்லை.

(தீராத)

தின்னப் பழங்கொண்டு தருவான் ;—பாதி

தின்கின்ற போதிலே தட்டிப் பறிப்பான் ;

என்னப்பன் என் ஐயன் என்றால்—அதனை

எச்சிற் படுத்திக் கடித்துக் கொடுப்பான்.

(தீராத)

தேனொத்த பண்டங்கள் கொண்டு—என்ன

செய்தாலும் எட்டாத உயரத்தில் வைப்பான் ;

மாநொத்த பெண்ணை என்பான்—சற்று

மனமகிழு நேரத்தி லேகிள்ளி விடுவான்.

(தீராத)

அழகுள்ள மலர் கொண்டு வந்தே—என்னை

அழஅழச் செய்துபின், “கண்ணை முடிக்கொள் ;

குழலிலே குட்டுவேன்” என்பான் ;—என்னைக்

குருடாக்கி மலரினைத் தோழிக்கு வைப்பான்.

(தீராத)

பின்னலைப் பின்னின் றிழுப்பான் ;—தலை

பின்னே திரும்புமுன் நேசென்று மறைவான் ;

வண்ணப் புதுச்சேலை தனிலே—புழுதி

வாரிச் சொரிந்தே வருத்திக் குலைப்பான்.

(தீராத)

புள்ளாங் குழல் கொண்டு வருவான் ;—அழுது

பொங்கித் ததும்புநற் கீதம் படிப்பான் ;

கள்ளால் மயங்குவது போலே—அதைக்

கண்முடி வாய்திறந் தேகேட் டிருப்போம்.

(தீராத)

அங்காந் திருக்கும் வாய் தனிலே—கண்ணன்

ஆறேழு கட்டெறும் பைப்போட்டு விடுவான் ;

எங்காகி லும்பார்த்த துண்டோ ?—கண்ணன்

எங்களைச் செய்கின்ற வேடிக்கை யொன்றோ ?

(தீராத)

Kannan — The Ever-Playful Boy.

Vinay Avasthi, Sarith Shrivastava, Trust Donations

"Haste thee, nymph, and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful jollity,
Quips and cranks and wanton wiles,
Nods and becks and wreath'd smiles."

- *L' allegro, Milton.*

An ever-playful boy is this Kannan.

An endless trouble to the girls in town.

Luscious fruit he distributes for eating
And snatches it as 'tis being eaten ;

5. When he's as 'Sire and Lord' praised and beseeched
He bites it and makes it, oh polluted.

- *An ever-playful boy ...*

Edibles sweet as honey he procures
And alas them he keeps high beyond reach.

"Thou art an antelope" he praises thus ;

10. I am elated but to feel his tweak. - *An ever-playful boy ..*

He comes with lovely flowers fragrant ; I yearn
And weep to wear them ; "Close thine eyes, I will
Them fix in your locks" so doth he promise ;
He blinds me thus and decks my friend's tresses.

- *An ever-playful boy ...*

15 He tugs at my plaited hair from behind,
Ere I could turn, he hies away and is hid.
When clad am I in a bright new saree
Dirt on it he rains and slays all my joy.

- *An ever-playful boy ...*

He comes with a flute and on it, aye, plays

20. A 'witching song that doth with nectar drip ;
As tho' by wine inebriate, with eyes
Full closed and mouths agape we lend our ears

- *An ever-playful boy ...*

Into the mouth agape doth Kannan drop
Big pismires black, six or seven, alas !

25. Is there anywhere a fellow like him ?
Innumerable are Kannan's pranks on us.

An ever-playful boy...

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வீனாயாட வாவென் றழைப்பான் ; — வீட்டில்

வேலையென் றுலதைக் கேளா திழுப்பான் ;

இனையாரொ டாடிக் குதிப்பான் ; — எம்மை

இடையிற் பிரிந்து போய் வீட்டிலே சொல்வான். (தீர)

அம்மைக்கு நல்லவன், கண்டிர் ! — மூளி

அத்தைக்கு நல்லவன், தந்தைக்கு மஃதே ;

எம்மைத் துயர்செய்யும் பெரியோர் — வீட்டில்

யாவர்க்கு நல்லவன் போலே நடப்பான். (தீர)

கோளுக்கு மிகவுஞ் சமர்த்தன் ; — பொய்மை

குத்திரம் பழிசொலக் கூசாச் சழக்கன் ;

ஆளுக் கிசைந்தபடி பேசி — தெருவில்

அத்தனை பெண்களையு மாகா தடிப்பான். (தீ)

Introductory Remarks

Boyhood and youth are full of sunny days. These salad days have about them a dazzling jasper-greenery. A boy is so full of joie de vivre, that he is even to be deemed totally blind to pain or pity. Not without reason does La Fontaine say : — " — cet age est sans pitie " (— that age (boyhood) is without pity.) The sportive acts of boys are sometimes murderous.

" As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods, —
They kill us for their sport. " (King Lear)

Kannan, the ' boy eternal ' was a delightful jester. His practical jokes were legion. The victims were always girls. These girls knew full well that their play-mate Kannan had always his bag of tricks and thingumajigs ready at hand and that sooner or later, they would be exposed to ineluctable derision. Kannan conceived his tricks on the spot and executed them in the most unexpected way, with such quick dexterity, before even the victims had a chance to smell mischief. His modus-operandi varied with his moods, the variety of which too, was infinite. Kannan left no leg unpulled. They had had it, the whole

He will drag us to play; when him we tell

"We have chores at home", spare us he will not;
With youngsters will he romp and jump; but'll sneak

30. Slyly, us to caluminate at home.

— *An ever-playful boy ...*

Good is he, mother thinks; so too the aunt
The fault-finder; our father deems him good;
Before elders that us tease, and others
In the house, he behaves as tho' he were good.

— *An ever-playful boy ...*

35. A caluminator par excellence

He blushes not, false tales base to carry;
Dance he can well to every body's tune:
But damned are all girls by his wiles galore.

— *An ever-playful boy ...*

caboodle Yet they would not bear to be away from him.
When he was with them, he was their head-ache; when he was
away, he was their heart-ache. They therefore had to perforce
prefer his divine teasings. No wonder the jester never lacked
his jestees.

What though the pranks and jests of Kannan be, they were
never sadistic. Schadenfreude was unknown to Kannan. His
quips and quiddities, his pranks and jokes, were without
bitterness. The tender victims complained about the mischief
of Kannan, not vexed, but actually titillated. Any sportive
lila of Kannan would be an argument for a week, laughter for
a month and a good jest for ever.

Line 1: An ever-playful boy :

Bharati in his Aatthichoodi says : Leelai iv vulaku (This world is a divine play). By a divine play of the Lord, this world is. Kamban calls the Lord : Alakilaa Vilayaattudaiyar (He of the interminable gambol).

Line 2: girls :

These girls symbolise devotees. The Lord puts them to test but to secure for them catharsis.

Line 3: Luscious fruit :

These symbolise the joys of life. No soul is for ever linked with the joys of the world. Misery, privation and the like set at naught these joys. The grace of Lord Kannan weans away the souls from the ephemeral joys of the phenomenal world.

Line 6: polluted :

The Hindu Sastras have everything to do with hygiene. According to the Sastras, one should not eat anything contaminated by the saliva of another. Even though saliva contaminates, the tongue itself is ever stainless, according to Brahmmasri N. V. Venkatasubrahmanya Sastriar. The tongue, be it remembered, is the throne of Saraswati

Line 9: antelope :

The comparison of a lass to an antelope is as old as hills. The points of comparison are: timidity, agility, gentleness, grace and beauty. The eyes of the antelope are lovely to behold. When Soorpanaka appeared as an enchanting beauty before Sri Rama to bewitch him, she, according to Kamban had robbed the peacock of his gait, and the gazelle, her eyes.

Line 10: I amtweak :

A pampered ego is soon punctured.

Line 14: He blinds ... tresses :

The sorrow of this Gopi is sharp as Elia's,

15

Cf. "The children of Alice call Bartrum father." Dream-Children.
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Line 15: He tugs ... behind:

Kannan appears to be the Aadi-Karta of this form of mischief which is current even to-day.

Lines 16-17: When clad ... joy:

Kannan is no admirer of vanity. His punishment is instantaneous.

Lines 19-20: He comes ... drips:

The notes of Kannan's flute are vocal velvet, opiate sweet. According to Periyaazhwaar when Kannan played on his flute, the feathered race deserted their nests and stood surrounding Kannan listening to his rapturous rhapsody in heightened elation, and the statant cattle lay on ground with legs outspread, without so much as fluttering once their ears. (They stiffened their ears, as even a single flutter meant so much of loss of ambrosial music.)

See also notes on lines 73, 75 and 360 - 361, The Song of The Kuyil, Bharati-Pancharatna Series No 2.

Line 26: Innumerosus:

No two pranks of Kannan are the same

Lines 27-28: He will ... at home:

The situation here is much worse than the one which Portia deftly created only to complain thus to Bassanio:

"You taught me first to beg; and now, methinks
You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd."

Line 32. The fault-finder:

Bharat's *Mooli* is so translated. A *Mooli* is a *Vidua*, a querulous one with a threeping tongue.

Line 38: damned are all the girls:

This damnation is indeed their salvation.

Message: Maxima debetur puero reverentia

(Great reverence is due to boyhood.) Juvenal,

(3)

கண்ணன்—என் காதலன் (1)

1. தூண்டிற் புழுவினைப்போல்—வெளியே
சுடர் விளக்கினைப் போல்
நீண்ட பொழுதாக—எனது
நெஞ்சந் துடித்ததடி.
கூண்டுக் கிளியினைப் போல்—தனிமை
கொண்டு மிகவு நொந்தேன் ;
வேண்டும் பொருளையெல்லாம்—மனது
வெறுத்து விட்டதடி.
2. பாயின் மிசைநானும்—தனியே
படுத்திருக்கையிலே
தாயினைக் கண்டாலும்,—சகியே
சலிப்பு வந்ததடி.
வாயினில் வந்ததெல்லாம்,—சகியே
வளர்த்துப் பேசிடீவீர் ;
நோயினைப் போலஞ்சினேன்,—சகியே
நுங்க ஞறவையெல்லாம்
3. உணவு செல்லவில்லை—சகியே
உறக்கம் கொள்ளவில்லை ;
மனம் விரும்பவில்லை,—சகியே
மலர் பிடிக்கவில்லை.
குணமுறுதியில்லை—எதிலும்
குழப்பம் வந்ததடி ;
கணமு முள்ளத்திலே—சுகமே
காணக் கிடைத்ததில்லை.
4. பாலுங் கசந்ததடி—சகியே
படுக்கை நொந்ததடி ;
கோலக் கிளிமொழியும்—செவியில்
குத்த லெடுத்ததடி.
நாலு வயித்தியரும்—இனிமேல்
நம்புதற் கில்லை யென்றார் ;
பாலத்துச் சோசியனும்—கிரகம்
தெதி மெளனியார்.

“Grape-juice does not turn to wine, unless it ferments a while in the jar.” *Rumi*.

Like the worm on fishing-hook, like the taper
 Flickering without, my heart did tremble
 For a long while; like a cage'd parrot
 I languished, aye, in loneliness ; my mind
 5. Grown bitter, hate'd all things once desired.

When I was lying on my lonely bed
 I couldn't O my friend, e'en my mother's presence
 Endure ; voluminous is your talk
 Which is without thought ; as a dire disease
 10. I dread you and your worthless sibship,

Eat I could not my dear friend, nor slumber ;
 Scent I resented and flowers also ;
 My nature did grow unfirm and in me
 Confusion reigned supreme ; happy could I
 15. Not be ; aye, even for a bare second.

Bitter to me the milk tasted, O friend !
 And my bed did prick me sore ; the babbling
 Of pretty popinjay did my ears bore.
 'Moribund' was I declared, by doctors four,
 20. The Astrologer o' the Bridge, my planets blamed.

5. கனவு கண்டதிலே — ஒரு நாள்
கண்ணுக்குத் தோன்றாமல்
இனம் விளங்கவில்லை — எவனோ
என்னகம் தொட்டு விட்டான்.
வினவக் கண்விழித்தேன் — சகியே
மேனி மறைத்து விட்டான் ;
மனதில் மட்டிலுமே — புதிதோர்
மகிழ்ச்சி கண்டதே.
6. உச்சி குளிர்ந்ததே — சகியே
உடம்பு நேராச்சு.
மச்சிலும் வீடுமெல்லாம் — முன்னைப்போல்
மனத்துக் கொத்ததே.
இச்சை பிறந்ததே — எதிலும்
இன்பம் விளைந்ததே.
அச்சம் ஒழிந்ததே — சகியே
அழகு வந்ததே.
7. எண்ணும் பொழுதிலெல்லாம் — அவன்கை
இட்ட விடத்தினிலே
தண்ணென் றிருந்ததே ; — புதிதோர்
சாந்தி பிறந்ததே ;
எண்ணி யெண்ணிப் பார்த்தேன் — அவன்தான்
யாரெனச் சிந்தைசெய்தேன் :
கண்ணன் திருவுருவம் — அங்ஙனே
கண்ணின்முன் னின்றதே.

Introductory Remarks :

Says Thomas A Kempis : "Sine dolore non vivitur in amore". (There is no living in love without suffering.) The lass in love, is a Moon-sick Chakor. Her hours of orange gold are paintinged. Her breath is a catena of heart-sore sighs. She has to clutch at something to keep afloat and that something is invariably 'grief'. So it is, Tennyson says : "Let Love clasp Grief, lest both be drown'd." Says Ovid : "Littore quot conchae, tot sunt amore dolores" (There are as many pangs in love as shells upon the shore)

Invisible to my eyes, as one day ^{Vinay Avasthi Sahib Bhuvan Vani Trust Donations}

I dreamed, some one — I wot not — , invaded

My heart ; wake up I did, him to accost.

And lo, he did vanish on a sudden.

25. But my mind was thrilled in a novel way.

Gone was the scalding pain of skull—now cool— :

I stood cured in body and as before

My storey'd house with me agreed ; in me

Longing sprang afresh and joy was ev'rywhere;

30 Gone was fear and beauty came back to me.

Whenever on this I ponder, that part

Of my frame that he toucht, Oh dear, grows cool;

A peace hitherto unknown dawns. I thought

And thought: "Who mote that person be?"

35. Kannan divine 't was, that stood before me.

The love-lorn lass is alike unhappy in company and in loneliness. She squirms in inexorable agony like a worm on the fishing line. She has to bear her agony and icy despair all alone. Dr. Radhakrishnan says: "The passions and the aspirations, the loneliness and the love, we cannot communicate to others. The others do not understand. They believe the passions to be mean, the feeling to be trite; and if we love, we have to bear it all in meekness. In such situations one must keep one's ideas to oneself. This does not mean betraying one's integrity. On the other hand, one is guarding it by silence, protecting it by one's endurance. After all, even the most powerful forces will find it hard to cope with the transparency of love, of love which suffers to the utmost."

Religious Disciplines.

See also, Notes, page xxxi, Bharati-Pancharatna Series No. 2.

Every girl feels a blessing in her mother's presence, say the one in love. Even mother is deemed by her to be a vexing intruder. The hum of bees, the flute of Koel, the fragrance of flowers, the silk-soft bed damasked with flowers, taste of milk, dainty dishes, the riot of hues that is the rainbow, the incense-breathing morn, the quiet noon, the russet sunset, the tranquil night - all these but serve to augment her woe. Love can be cured by love only. And the pain of love ends abruptly as it comes. When fulfilment crowns love, there is no end to fresh-received felicity.

According to Bharati, to the one that suffers from a mystical love, a touch or a vision is a consummation devoutly to be wished.

Notes

Line 4 :

See Notes page xxxi, Bharati-Pancharatna Series No. 2.

Line 6 . lonely bed :

The love-lorn lass loves intense loneliness to love and languish the more.

Lines 7-8 : I could not ... Endure :

The daughter does not hate the mother ; she cannot. The presence of mother, instead of healing the malady only augments it. Hence the vexation.

Lines 8-9 : Voluminous ... thought :

A mind unhinged by love is out of tune ; is out of harmony. To that mind even normalcy is harsh and unbearable. Even friends and their talk become repellent.

Lines 9-10 : as a dire ... sibship :

In that state, friends are unwelcome ; nay they are to be positively shunned.

Line 11 : Eat I could not :

Each delicious morsel is emetic.

Line 11 : nor slumber :

The love-mad suffer a sickening insomnia

Nala Venba, Tr. Maurice Langton.

Leaves from a Log, Dr. K. R. S. Iyengar.

Silken flowers, the perfume of which is faint but fine, are supposed to sweeten the sense with 'essences of love'. But these too are now dreaded. When a girl cannot endure fragrance and flowers, it means, the symptom has started asserting itself violently.

The damsel in love is no longer the same person. She is unsteady, upset and ungovernable. So long as her love remains unrequited, she will be sore, sullen, sad.

Milk is sour to a tongue diseased; more so to a sick mind.

The bed no is longer a bed, when a lass is full of invisible sores of love. To her the bed is a vast sheet of sand-paper. "The bed" as Dr. Prema Nandakumar says, is "a spread of thorns."

The love-lorn lass who has been living in a nightmarish 'jaagra' state is now hurled into the 'turiya' state from which 'turiyatheeta' is not far away. The illness makes the doctors,— four or four hundred — mere mountebanks,

Line 20: The astrologer ... blames :

Astrology is good ; astrologers are bad They have their ready scape-goat, the stars.

Line 22 . I dreamed :

Obviously a waking dream.

Cf. "Another dream uncommonly vivid"

Dr. K R S. Iyengar, Leaves from a Log

Line 23 : Some one :

That One is the One who is indefinable, indescribable ineffable but ineluctable.

Lines 23-24 : invaded My heart :

Cf. 'As He barged into my heart ...'

Thirugnaṇa Sambhanda

Line 23 : wake up I did :

From the stupor of inconstance the devotee is stung to illumination.

Line 24 : he did ... sudden :

The mystic touch darts into the soul like a spicule and its disappearance is as sudden as its appearance.

Line 25 : But my thrill'd :

Hereafter it is Ananda that fills the soul

Line 26 : Gone was now cool :

Prof. A. Srinivasa Raghavan's translation is :

"And I felt calm".

Dr. Prema Nandakumar's translation is :

"I thrilled to my roots".

With the fever of the brain gone, the lass feels a calm and is thrilled to her roots.

Line 28 : ^{Vinay Avasthi, Sahib Bhuvan Vani Trust Donations} My storey'd house :

The figure in the original is hendiadys.

Line 29 : Longing sprang afresh :

Hitherto all desires were dead in the anonymous longing of love. The soul was soused in bitterness. Now normalcy resumes her reign with a sweet gusto.

Line 30 : And joy was ev'rywhere :

It is the same old world ; the person also is the same. Yet everything now is changed and wears a look of joy and freshness.

Cf. (1) "He looked around him as if seeing the world for the first time. The world was beautiful"

Herman Hesse, Siddhartha, page 40.

(2) "Siddhartha learned something new on every step of his path, for the world was transformed and he was enthralled." *Ibid, page 47.*

Line 32 : he touch'd :

This is the God-touch of spiritual initiation.

Line 33 : A peace :

The peace that surpasseth knowledge It is an 'anubhuti'.

Lines 34-35 : "Who ... " before me :

This is the outer manifestation of inner illumination.

Message : The soul in Malaparipaaka receives initiation by touch or vision or the like.

(4)

கண்ணன் — என் காதலன் (2)

நேர மிகுந்ததின்னும் நித்திரையின்றி—உங்கள்
நினைப்புத் தெரியவில்லை, கூத்தடிக்கிறீர் ;
சோரனுறங்கி விழு நள்ளிரவிலே—என்ன
தூளி படுகுதடி, இவ்விடத்திலே.

5. ஊரை யெழுப்பிவிட நிச்சயங் கொண்டீர்—அன்னை
ஒருத்தியுண் டென்பதையு மறந்து விட்டீர் ;
சார மிகுந்த தென்று வார்த்தை சொல்கிறீர்—மிகச்
சலிப்புத் தருகுதடி சகிப் பெண்களே.

நானும் பலதினங்கள் பொறுத்திருந்தேன்—இது

10. நாளுக்கு நாளதிக மாகி விட்டதே ;
கூன னொருவன் வந்திந் நானி பின்னலைக்
கொண்டை மலர் சிதற நின்றிழுத்ததும்,
ஆனை மதம் பிடித்திவ் வஞ்சியம்மை யின்
அருகினி லோட இவள் மூர்ச்சை யுற்றதும்,
15. பாணையில் வெண்ணெய் முற்றும் தின்று விட்டதால்
பாங்கி யுரோகணிக்கு நோவு கண்டதும்
பத்தினியானே யொரு பண்ணை வெளியில்
பத்துச் சிறுவர் வந்து முத்தமிட்டதும்,
நத்தி மகனினுக் கோர் சோதிடன் வந்து
20. நாற்ப தாசர் தம்மை வாக்களித்ததும்
கொத்துக் கனல் விழி அக் கோவினிப் பெண்ணை
கொங்கத்துமுனி கண்டு கொக்கரித்ததும்,
வித்தைப் பெயருடைய வீணியவளும்
மேற்குத்திசை மொழிகள் கற்று வந்ததும்

25. எத்தனை பொய்களடி, என்ன கதைகள் !
என்னை யுறக்கமின்றி இன்னல் செய்கிறீர் ;
சத்தமிடுங் குழல்கள் வீணைக் கொல்லாம்
தாளங்க ளோடு கட்டி முடியுங்கே

Kannan - My Lover (2) ✓

"Rein in thy tongue."

Thiruvalluvar.

The night is old and yet you slumber not ;
 What may your thought be ? Why this jamboree ?
 At dead of night whilst e'en the robber sleeps
 Why this junketting here ? 'll you the town waken ?

5. Are ye of the mother oblivious ?

You claim to indulge in charming talk wise,
 O ye comrades of unending boredom !

I had for many days in patience 'dured ;
 This but groweth day by day all the more.

10. "A hunch-back did tug at the plaited hair
 Of Naani that flowers from her bun spilled ;
 Down she fell in a terrific swoon, when
 The mad tusker ran past matron Vanchi ;
 Rohini was upset and ill also

15. As she a whole pot of butter polished.

In the open farm-yard came striplings ten
 And bussed her, the model of continence ;
 For Natthi's daughter 'd queue up kings forty
 As by an astrologer predicted ;

20. That girl Kovini whose eyes fire emit
 Was by the mis-shapen Konkan-wench railed ;
 The blue-stockings, the wastrel 'Knowledge' named,
 Is in the tongues of the west proficient : "

How many are these your fibs and fables

25. You suffer me not to slumber in peace.
 Pack, I say all your noisy flutes and lutes,
 Your cymbals and gongs, and keep them away.

- மெத்த வெளிச்சமின்றி யொற்றை விளக்கை
 30. மேற்குச் சுவரருகில் வைத்ததன் பின்னர்,
 நித்திரை கொள்ள எனைத் தனியில் விட்டே
 நீங்களெல் லோரு முங்கள் வீடு செல்லுவீர்.
 பாங்கியர் போன பின்பு துனியிருந்து சொல்லுதல்
 கண்க ளுறங்க வொரு காரண முண்டோ
 கண்ணனை இன்றிரவு காண்பதன் முன்னே ?
 35. பெண்க ளெல்லோரு மவர் வீடு சென்றிட்டார் ;
 பிரிய மிகுந்த கண்ணன் காத்திருக்கின்றான்
 வெண்கல வாணிகரின் வீதி முனையில்
 வேலிப் புறத்தி லெனைக் காணடி யென்றான் ;
 கண்க ளுறங்க லெனுங் காரிய முண்டோ,
 40. கண்ணனைக் கையிரண்டுங் கட்டலின்றியே.

Introductory Remarks

Each one lives his life as he desires or as is forced on him. The normal citizen does not claim to live an exemplary life nor is that his ideal. Yet his life does not pass uncommented by the Peeping Toms, the tale bearers and the eavesdroppers.

Men as well as women look at others from their particular peep-holes and pass gratuitous judgements. 'Judge not' is the one commandment, they cannot keep. They cannot remain 'summa' and keep their mouths shut. They must talk and talk, and any news, tid-bit, rumour, is grist to their mill. Gossip is

"That abominable tittle-tattle

Which is the cud eschew'd by human cattle."

Byron.

There is a vicious and vicarious pleasure in gossiping. Though the opposite of gossip about men and affairs is often the truth, gossip thrives multiplying itself in multitudinous ways. Little things please little minds. And the little slums of minds are heaped with the filth and dirt of gossip and scandal.

Gossip is poisonous. Its capacity for self-propagation is immense. That which passes out of one month passes into a thousand ears. Seldom do we come across a person who is

- Light a feeble little lamp and place it
 In the niche of the western wall, yonder,
 30. And please go home, aye, every one of you
 That I may all alone repose a while.

Soliloquy after the departure of friends.

- No cause have my eyes to close in slumber
 Before they do behold Kannan to-night;
 All the maids have, aye, to their homes repaired;
 35. Haply dear Kannan is waiting for me.
 Without the fence, at the corner of street
 Of bronze—merchants, he did our sweet tryst fix;
 What have eyes of mine to do with slumber
 Before my hands firm enfold Kannan dear.
-

not interested in gossip. We do not like to be gossiped by others, yet we gossip about others. The person who lends his ears to gossip, scandal, rodomontade and ondit is worse than a receiver of stolen properties. He is verily a marshland collecting and spreading miasmata.

Dickens says: "The words she spoke of Mrs. Harris, lambs could not forgive ... nor worms forget." (Martin Chuzzlewit). To the merriment of gossips when they meet, there is no end. Little do they care for refined ears. They ply their tongues industriously and people the air with noxious rumours.

Every village has its well-established School for Scandal. The gossips have a fantastic power for misinterpretation. A nod or a shrug, a look or a smile—nothing escapes their attention and a whole history is fabricated in seconds. Little do the gossips know, nor care to know, that by a mere word, a reputation can be slain, a person or a whole family can be ruined.

With or without water, the wind-mill of gossip for ever grinds.

It is said of Aanava Mala that it is a double darkness. It hides in the soul and hides the soul. The soul under the clutches of Aanava is unaware of the fact that it is held by Aanava in thralldom. This is practically the state of the unenlightened in almost all respects. The (non-malicious) gossip is never aware of the pernicious nature of gossip in which he is normally and freely indulging. When he becomes enlightened, he will very much rue his past conduct and will avoid the company of gossips.

In this poem this psychological aspect is highlighted by Bharati. The lass who is languishing for love of Kanna, has hitherto suffered her friends to employ their tongues in loose talk. The cathartic contact of Kannan has clearly debunked the meanness of gossip. She can therefore no longer endure it. She now reprimands her friends who delight in wagging their tale-bearing tongues.

This poem comprises five stanzas and of these only one stanza relates to the tryst. The other stanzas deal with the abomination of gossip for which the heroine has now nothing but undisguised contempt

Notes

Line 2: Why this jamboree ? :

Actually it is

“A monkeying and dreary much ado
for feeding futility ! ”

Tryst with the Divine, Dr. K. R. S. Iyengar.

Lines 6-7: You claim ... boredom :

These talkers are charmed by their own facile fluency. They talk ill of others behind their back and feel vain in that they think that they do not suffer from the weaknesses of others who are ridiculed by them.

Cf. "People worm themselves into secrecies
avid for slick vanities."

— *Tryst with the Divine, Dr. K. R. S. Iyengar.*

Lines 8-24 : I had fables ! :

These 'oddments and assortments' of gossip formerly made a 'grand divertissement' for the heroine. These are now for her an odium.

Lines 26 to 30 : Pack, I say ... one of you :

The heroine appears to be a nautch-girl. Bharati wrote at a time when the institution of Deva-daasi was in full swing. 'Booloka-Rambai' is a short-story by Bharati which deals with a sly strumpet. Sri. R. A. Padmanabhan has reproduced this story in his 'Bharati-Puthaiyal', Volume one.

Line 32 : No cause slumber :

Cf. "What hath night to do with sleep ?

Night hath better sweets to prove ;

Venus now wakes, and wakens Love. "

— *Comus, Milton.*

Lines 38-39 : What have ... Kannan dear :

Cf. "And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honey'd middle of the night."

— *The Eve of St Agnes, St.6, Keats.*

(5)

கண்ணன்—என் காதலன். (3)

திக்குத் தெரியாத காட்டில் -- உனைத்
தேடித் தேடி இளைத்தேனே

மிக்க நலமுடைய மரங்கள் — பல
விந்தைச் சுவையுடைய கனிகள் — எந்தப்
பக்கத்தையு மறைக்கும் வரைகள் — அங்கு
பாடி நகர்ந்து வரு நதிகள் — ஒரு

(திக்குத்)

நெஞ்சிற் கனல் மணக்கும் பூக்கள், — எங்கும்
நீளக் கிடக்கும் இலைக் கடல்கள், — மதி
வஞ்சித் திடும் அகழிச் சுனைகள் — முட்கள்
மண்டித் துயர் கொடுக்கும் புதர்கள் — ஒரு

(திக்குத்)

ஆசை பெற விழிக்கும் மான்கள் — உள்ளம்
அஞ்சக் குரல் பழகும் புலிகள் — நல்ல
நேசக் கவிதை சொல்லும் பறவை, — அங்கு
நீண்டே படுத்திருக்கும் பாம்பு — ஒரு

(திக்குத்)

தன்னிச்சை கொண்டலையும் சிங்கம் — அதன்
சத்தத்தினில் கலங்கும் யானை — அதன்
முன்றின்று ஓடும் இளமான்கள் — இவை
முட்டாது அயல் பதுங்கும் தவளை — ஒரு

(திக்குத்)

கால்கை சோர்ந்து விழலானேன் — இரு
கண்ணும் துயில்படரல் ஆனேன் — ஒரு
வேல்கைக் கொண்டு கொலை வேடன் — உள்ளம்
வெட்கங் கொண்டு ஒழிய விழித்தான் — ஒரு

(திக்குத்)

“பெண்ணே உனது அழகைக் கண்டு — மனம்
பித்தங் கொள்ளுது” என்று நகைத்தான் — “அடி-
கண்ணே, எனது இருகண் மணியே உனைக்
கட்டித் தழுவ மனங் கொண்டேன்

சோர்ந்தே படுத்திருக்கலாமோ ? — நல்ல
துண்டக் கறி சமைத்துத் தின்போம் — சுவை
தோர்ந்தே கனிகள் கொண்டு தருவேன் — நல்ல
தேய்கள் உனக்கு இனிது கனிவேமாம்”

(5)

Kannan — My Lover. (3)**(Kannan's Grace Never Fails.)**

In the pathless wood sans sense of direction
I searched and searched for thee and did languish.

Good trees a good many; fruitage full
Of wondrous taste; blocking hills everywhere

5. And coursing brooks that babble as they move;
— *In the pathless wood ...*

Flowers fragrant as ruddy flame, and seas
Of leaves everywhere; springs there're that deceive
Unwary minds; tormenting bushes thorny;

— *In the pathless wood... ..*

- Antelopes with eyes o' love; growling tigers
10. That chill the heart; birds with lips o' poesy;
Ponderous snakes long on their bellies prone;
— *In the pathless wood*

The lion roams at pleasure; at its roar loud
The tuskers shake with fear; the flight of deer
That causeth the frogs to hop to safety.

— *In the pathless wood*

15. Fatigued in limb and body, down I fell
And was by sleep o'ercome; with a javelin
Stood a killer-hunter and shameless stared.
— *In the pathless wood*

"O dame! I am tipsy with thy love" quoth he
And laughed. "O darling pupil of my eyes

20. I mean to hold thee tight in my embrace."

"Why languish in dull fatigue? We will cook
Venison, a thoothsome meal and eat fruits
Of rare taste and toddy quaff o' palm in joy."

என்றே கொடியவிழி வேடன் — உயிர்
இற்றுப் போகவிழித்து உரைத்தான் — தனி
நின்றே இருகரமும் குவித்து — அந்த
நீசன் முன்னர் இவை சொல்வேன் :

“அண்ணா ! உனதடியில் வீழ்வேன் — எனை
அஞ்சக் கொடுமை சொல்ல வேண்டா — பிறன்
கண்ணுலஞ் செய்துவிட்ட பெண்ணை — உன்தன்
கண்ணால் பார்த்திடவும் தகுமோ ?”

“ஏட, சாத்திரங்கள் வேண்டேன் — நின் (து)
இன்பம் வேண்டுமடி, கனியே ! — நின்தன்
மோடி கிறுக்குதடி தலையை — நல்ல
மொந்தைப் பழைய கள்ளைப்போலே.”

காதால் இந்த உரை கேட்டேன் — ‘அட
கண்ணா !’ என்று அலறி வீழ்ந்தேன் — மிகப்
போதாக வில்லை யிதற்குள்ளே — என்தன்
போதம் தெளிய நினைக் கண்டேன்.

கண்ணா ! வேடன் எங்கு போனான் ? — உனைக்
கண்டே அலறி விழுந்தானோ ? — மணி
வண்ணா ! என(து) அபயக்குரலில் — எனை
வாழ்விக்க வந்த அருள் வாழி !

Introductory Remarks

On 15-7-1975 I addressed the members of the Lions club of Thanjavur when they held the Bharati-day Celebration. I am giving hereunder the gist of my talk which was meant to elucidate the mystique of this very poem, “Thikku Theriyatha Kaattil” in the light of Saiva Siddhanta.

The great sustaining factor viz., faith in God, is the message of the poem. On a close scrutiny we will find that this poem is a masterpiece in allegory, a near-perfection in symbolism and a recordation of a mystic experience.

Thus spake the cruel-eyed Bowman whose stare
 Vihay Avasthi said Bhuvan Mani

25. Did wilt my life ; as in adoration

With folded hands I implored the knave thus :

I'll at thy feet, my brother elder, fall ;

Thy words affright me ; 'sit proper to cast

Such looks on me, the wife of someone else ?"

30. "Damn Sastras, silly wench ! 'tis your union

I am after ; by your enchantment reels

My head as though I had bibbed toddy old."

As I to these words hearkened, down I fell

Loud shrieking "Hey Kanna" and aye, anon

35. I woke up recovered to behold thee.

Kanna, where is that hunter gone ? Did he

At thy coming perish ? Thou didst answer

My prayer ; may thy saving Grace flourish !

Behind each word in this poem lies recondite a mystical meaning. Commenting on the life which Bharati lived, Prof. P. Mahadevan says : "Like all men of genius, Bharati ... worked at two levels — one humdrum, prosaic and matter of fact, and the other inspired, occult and unpredictable." Well, what applies to the poet, applies equally to his poems also.

The quest into the occult and the mystical is like unto pearl-diving. One may surface up with pearls or loathsome oysters. But the pleasure of diving is not to be gainsaid. We will therefore take the plunge.

According to Saiva Siddhanta there are three eternal verities viz. Pati, Pasu and Paasam: These are the Lord, the Flock (souls) and the Fettering Rope. Paasam is there-old. In other words, there are three malas (impurities) and these like Pati and Pasu are beginningless.

Vinay Avasthi, Sahib, Bhuvan, Yash, Tuls, Dwarika
Aanavam is the original mala, which is co-eternal with the eternal soul. **Aanavam** is derived from the root **Anu**, atom or atomic smallness. This defect of the soul is one, born together with. The other two malas are **akantuka** or adventitious.

Now there are six bad things which beset a soul. They are **Kama**, **Krota**, **Moha**, **Lopa**, **Mada** and **Maathsarya**.

Man is given embodiment to work out his **iruvina** (i.e.) his stock of acquired merits and demerits. As **St. Maanicka. vaachakar** says, man is like unto a puppet pulled by the two cords of deeds, good and evil. Though in his embodied state, man is supposed to get over the cycle of birth and death, yet he falls a prey to false things and commits deeds which are seeds for future births. We should know that even the righteous man i.e., the man who for the most part does good deeds only, does not and cannot escape embodiment. The dwellers in **Swarga** do not live in endless felicity. With the explosion of their **Punya-Bank**, they get re-born. So **Punya** (righteous deed) is described as a golden manacle. Gold or iron, who will itch after a manacle ?

The soul can punctuate a full-stop to its cycle of embodiment and dis embodiment, only when it reaches a state called '**iruvina oppu**'. This is a stage when the spiritual balance-sheet of the soul is spotlessly clean, with no entry on the debit or credit side. **Iruvinai-oppu** ushers the descent of grace. Grace is called **Arul Sakthi**. This grace comes in the form of **Siva Guru**. The **Guru** initiates the soul into **Jeevan-Mukti**. The divine mantra is whispered into the ears of the initiated and it slides into the soul irretrievably. The soul chants this mantra as taught and companies with the devout. To the freed soul, the marks and emblems of **Saivism** are **Siva Himself**. The liberated soul travels on life's common way in cheerful **Sivananda**. The soul eventually quits the mayic tabernacle and is oned with **Siva**.

Aanavamala is the darkening principle in life. It keeps the soul in a state of benightedness. The soul is deprived of its power to see, in other words, vision. This state indeed is "the pathless wood sans sense of direction" (திக்குத் தெரியாத காடு).

The unenlightened soul cannot reach God; even if it tries, it will end up as an Avasthi Sribhūvan Vani Trust Donations. The unenlightened soul therefore merely wanders and feels lost. This plight is thus described by Bharati: "I searched and searched for thee and did languish" (உனைத் தேடித் தேடி இளைத்தேனே)

34

The antelope has an Ithihasic association with Moha. With the name Maaya Maan (மாய மான்) the alumnus of Ramayana is very familiar.

Mada which is egoism, is here represented by "Ponderous snakes long on their bellies prone" (நீண்டே படுத்திருக்கும் பாம்பு). "It is the bright day that brings forth the adder

And that craves wary walking "

Lopa is miserliness. It is notorious that the lion, the reputed lord of the jungle, is also the King of miserliness. The expression "lion's share" speaks for itself. This self-willed Lopa is described by Bharati as "The lion (that) roars at pleasure" (தன்னிச்சை கொண்டலையும் சிங்கம்).

The sixth of the nefarious lot is Maathsarya which is enmity brooding vengeance. The elephant, it is said, always brooding vendetta. "The tuskers" (யானை) therefore find a due place in the arena of Aaranya which is life.

The poem deals with a damsel in distress. She symbolises the soul. The soul which is assailed by its six enemies, somehow manages to escape them. But the greatest of dangers is yet to be averted. To put it masonic mysticism "it will await the soul until the latest hour". This danger referred to by St. Meikanda Deva as "ஐம்புல வேடர்" (The Hunter called the Senses Five). This Hunter is almost invincible. So says Bharati: "With a javelin, Stood a Killer hunter and shameless stared" (—ஒரு வேல்கைக் கொண்ட கொலை வேடன்—உள்ளம் வெட்கம் கொண்டொழிய விழித்தான்). The Five-Senses are for ever hunting after the soul. The soul's innate longing is for the Lord's embrace. However the Five Senses for ever deflect the course of the soul's journey. See how the Hunter addresses the damsel.

"O dame ! I am tipsy with thy love" ;

"I mean to hold thee tight in my embrace" .

(பெண்ணே உனதழகைக் கண்டு—மனம்

பித்தங் கொள்ளுது ;

—உனைக் கட்டித் தழுவ மனம் கொண்டேன்) .

The function of the unsubdued senses is to mislead the soul with tinsel and tinket, bauble and bangle. The Hunter (Senses Five) offers unto the soul, "Venison, a toothsome meal" (துண்டக் கறி சமையல்), "fruits of rare taste" (சுவை தேர்ந்த கணிகள்), palm-toddy old" (நல்ல தேங்களு)—all with a view to make her subserve him. In utter disregard of the scriptures, the Hunter thunders thus :

"Damn Sastras, silly wench ! 'tis your union
I am after ;"

(ஏடி, சாத்திரங்கள் வேண்டேன் — நினது
இன்பம் வேண்டுமடி).

Thus entrapped, the soul has no saving force save the Grace of the Lord. Saiva Siddhanta calls this 'Arul Sakti'. When the soul is mellowed and makes a total surrender, the Lord claims it through His 'Arul Sakti'. When Sakti manifests, no force can dare form a barricade between Pati and Pasu. When 'Arul' pours in, Paasam is washed away. "With the advent of Pati, Paasam flits away" (பதி அனுகில் பாசம் நிலாவே) are the words of the Prince of Mystics - *Thirumoolar*.

With the advent of Kannan (Grace), Paasam vamooses. When Paasam disappears, with it disappear the sensory and the sensual. Cries the damsel soul, now, in thrills of ecstasy:

"Kanna, where is that hunter gone ? Did he
At thy coming perish ?"

கண்ணா ! வேடன் எங்கு போனான் ? உனைக்
கண்டே அலறி விழுந்தானோ ?"

It is thus Bharati celebrates the mystic odyssey of a soul, in a little poem of remarkable simplicity. Bharati, alive to the potency of the all-merciful Arul, fittingly ends his poem with a blessing on the ever-blessing Arul.

"May Thy saving Grace flourish"

(வாழ்விக்க வந்த அருள் வாழி).

Some may think that whereas Saiva Siddhanta celebrates the supremacy of Siva, Bharati has only sung the glory of Kannan, the Lord of the Paancharaatrins.

Friends take it from me Kannan (கண்ணன்) means
 Mukkannan (முக்கண்ணன்) and vice versa. Bharati says
 "You are Siva Whom I adore, Oh Kanna!" (தொழுவே
 சிவனும் நினைவே—கண்ணா!)

Notes

Line 1: In the pathless wood :

This world is a pathless wood. The embodied life roams
 benighted in this wood. St. Arunagiri in his Kandar-Anubhava
 makes this rogation.

"When can I see my way out of the tangle of wealth
 (Samsar and misery)

Dense and dark like the Vindhya jungle?"

Tr. Swami Anvananda

Nammaazhwaar says :

"False knowledge, wrong conduct, body of dirt ;
 Such is my life."

Tr. Dr. Prema Nandakumar

Cf. (i) "A pathless desert, dusk with horrid shades"
Paradise Regained, I, Line 296.

(ii) "But their way
 Lies through the perplexed paths of this drear wood
 The nodding horror of whose shady brows
 Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger."
Comus, Lines 36—39.

(iii) "In the blind mazes of this tangled wood"
Comus, Line 181.

(iv) "leafy labyrinth"
Ibid, Line 278.

Line 1 : sans sense of direction :

Our senses (Gnaanendriya) and even our
 sensorium (Antakarana) mislead rather than lead us.

Line 2 : I searched ... languish :

Evolution has moved from alga and amoeba to ichthyosaurus, then to mammalian hominoids and finally to man. And man is never tired of his search for the Truth which appears to be elusive.

Cf. "Benighted in the woods" *Comus*, Line 150.

Lines 3-4 : Good trees ... taste :

See Notes on Lines 3-4, *Kannan - The Ever - Playful Boy*.

Cf. "berries, or such cooling fruit

As the kind hospitable woods provide "

- *Comus* Ll. 186-187.

Line 4 : blocking hills everywhere :

The quest is stymied by hills of obstruction.

Line 5 : And coursing ... move :

A seemingly pleasant divertissement.

Line 6 : Flowers ... flame :

Cf. அரக்காம்பல் நெருப்பூதும்,

பெரிய புராணம்

Lines 6-7 : seas Of leaves everywhere :

These are the emblems of mortality.

Lines 7-8 . springs .. Unwary minds :

These are the base, veiled betraying desires of men.

Line 8 : tormenting bushes thorny :

The 'fardels' about which Hamlet complains.

Line 9 : Antelopes with eyes o' love :

These are the flesh - pots, the disguised Soorpanakas.

We must beware them. Dr. K. R. S. Iyengar says :

"The mind in its moments of achieved calm

feels besieged by random lust. "

Leaves from a Log.

Friends, take it from me Kannan (கண்ணன்) means
 Mukkannan (முக்கண்ணன்) and vice versa. Bharati says:
 "You are Siva Whom I adore, Oh Kanna!" (தொழுவேன்
 சிவனும் நினைவே—கண்ணா!)

Notes

Line 1: In the pathless wood :

This world is a pathless wood. The embodied life roams
 benighted in this wood. St. Arunagiri in his Kandar-Anubuti
 makes this rogation.

"When can I see my way out of the tangle of wealth
 (Samsar and misery)

Dense and dark like the Vindhya jungle?"

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"The mind in its moments of achieved calm
feels besieged by random lust."

Leaves from a Log.

Lines 9-10 : growling tigers ... heart

Anger is nothing but Kama (desire) in disguise. When desire meets with opposition, it turns into wrath. And wrath growls like a tiger.

Line 10 : birds with lips o' poesy :

These are the apsaras who pull you to the Paradise thereby blocking your path to Moksha. According to Triloka-Sitaram, even poetry has to be beyonded "Sevi Kaanum kavithaiyum thaam madangi" are his words.

Line 11 : Ponderousprone :

These are the proverbial Arukashas who zero all your efforts.

Line 12 : The lion pleasure :

Pride and wanton destruction is abroad.

Lines 12-13 : at itsfear :

Even a hill of strength has its in-built weakness.

Lines 13-14: the flightto safety :

The heady leap of the frightened and the affrighted hop of the scared, to apparent safety.

Lines 16-17: with a javelinstared :

The Aanavamala-incarnate hunter stares into terrible waking the sleeping damsel-soul.

Lines 18-23 : "O dame ! in joy"

The hunter spreads his net of five senses.

Lines 25-29 : as inelse ?

To yield is not to conquer. The soul is the bride of the Lord and belongs to Pati, not to Paasam.

Cf. "The aidless innocent lady, his wished prey"

Lines 30 --32 : "Damn Sastras toddy old".

Lucifer, Ravana, Soorapanma are Aanava embodied. They may cite scriptures for a wrong purpose. They quote them only to damm them, if possible.

Ravana was a pundit of Vedas His punditry was only varletry.

Line 34 : 'Hey Kanna'

The taraka-nama, the never-failing help, the great Shakti that saves.

Even while "Brahman, Vishnu, Shiva and Surya seem unaccountably petrified into hapless and helpless futilities, Shakti bestirs herself to redeem .." *Dr. K. R. S. Iyengar.*

"A single utterance of the name of God" says Nama Deva "creates panic among sins."

Lines 36-37 : Where is ... perish ?

With the descent of Grace, Aanava is quelled.

Line 38 : may the saving Grace flourish :

This is a benediction for all times.

Message :

"The braziers of high aspiration
invoke the downpour of Grace"

Microcosmographia Poetica, *Dr. K R. S. Iyengar.*

(6)

கண்ணன் — என் காதலன். (4)

(பாங்கியைத் தூது விடுத்தல்)

கண்ணன் மனநிலையைத் தங்கமே தங்கம் —

அடி தங்கமே தங்கம்

கண்டுவர வேனுமடி தங்கமே தங்கம் ;
எண்ண முரைத்துவிடில் தங்கமே தங்கம் பின்னர்
ஏதெனிலும் செய்வமடி தங்கமே தங்கம்.

கன்னிகை யாயிருந்து தங்கமே தங்கம் — நாங்கள்
காலங் கழிப்பமடி தங்கமே தங்கம் ;
அன்னிய மன்னர்மக்கள் பூமியிலுண்டாம் — என்னும்
அதனையுஞ் சொல்லிடடி தங்கமே தங்கம்.

சொன்ன மொழிதவறு மன்ன வனுக்கே — எங்கும்
தோழமை யில்லையடி தங்கமே தங்கம் ;
என்ன பிழைகளிங்கு கண்டிருக்கின்றான் ? — அவை
யாவுந் தெளிவு பெறக் கேட்டு விடஊ.

மையல் கொடுத்துவிட்டுத் தங்கமே தங்கம் — தலை
மறைந்து திரிபவர்க்கு மானமு முண்டோ ?
பொய்யை யுருவமெனக் கொண்டவ னென்றே — கிழப்
பொன்னி யுரைத்ததுண்டு தங்கமே தங்கம்.

ஆற்றங் கரையதனில் முன்ன மொருநாள் — என
அழைத்துத் தனியிடத்திற் பேசிய தெல்லாம்
தூற்றி நகர்முரசு சாற்றுவ னென்றே
சொல்லி வருவையடி தங்கமே தங்கம்

சோர மிழைத்திடையர் பெண்களுடனே — அவன்
குழ்ச்சித் திறமைபல காட்டுவ தெல்லாம்
வீர மறக்குலத்து மாதரி டத்தே
வேண்டிய தில்லையென்று சொல்லி விடஊ.

(6)

Kannan — My Lover. (4) ✓

(Deploying a friend as messenger)
("The pangs of despis'd love") Hamlet

Thou shouldst, oh golden damsel, Kannan's mind
Fathom; if only he chooses to, us
Inform, we will do what is meet for us.

Spinsters will we be, oh golden damsel!

5. Throughout our lives; tell him eke that there are
Sons of alien monarchs on this wide earth.

Friendship none has the king, oh golden dame!
Who doth break his plighted word. What blemish
Did he in us find? Pray, let him say that.

10. Love he lit and deserted; he now lives
In hiding, void of shame, oh golden dame!
'He is a pack of lies', warned Ponni old.

Did he not one day take me to a spot
Secret on the river-bank and talk? Tell him

15. Oh golden damsel, I will publish it all,

His tricks with shepherd girls, -well -, let him know
Canst not pass muster before heroic dames :
Declare this to him, oh golden damsel!

பெண்ணென்று பூமிதனிற் பிறந்து விட்டால்—மிகப்
 பீழை யிருக்குதடி தங்கமே தங்கம் ;
 பண்ணென்று வேயங்குழலில் ஊதி வந்திட்டான்—அதைப்
 பற்றி மறக்குதில்லை பஞ்சை யுள்ளமே.
 நேரமுழுதிலும்ப் பான் தன்னையே—உள்ளம்
 நினைத்து மறுகுதடி தங்கமே தங்கம் ;
 தீர ஒரு சொலின்று கேட்டு வந்திட்டால்—பின்பு
 தெய்வ மிருக்குதடி தங்கமே தங்கம்.

Introductory Remarks

According to Saiva Siddhanta as well as Visishtadwaita souls are numberless. Each soul is entitled to be oned with God. In fact, sooner or later, souls attain Moksha. However no soul is entitled to feel jealous. No one soul, however deep its love for God be, can bargain for exclusive company with God.

Conflicting indeed are the laws of the world and the world of Lord beyond worlds. Here the laws are mainly regional. So, the highest truth in the phenomenal world may amount to a basic error in Siva-Loka. The soul must pre-prepare for an entry into God's world. The soul that craves for a monopoly of God's love, is as yet, immature. It is yet to attain Gopihood. Rasa-lila is an open and divine drama enacted, not in any secret place, but in the well-exposed arena of Brindavan. All the devotee-damsels have their fill of bliss of God's love.

The damsel in this poem is roasted alive by the pangs of separation. The beloved feels deserted, forsaken, abandoned. She feels slighted and insulted. A woman can bear anything but not her lover's indifference. Prolonged indifference kindles in her an apparent hatred for her lover. The ignored beloved is an ignited dynamite. She cannot contain herself. She, like St. Maanickavaachakar will give out that she will, for sure debunk her lover to pillory and derision. If even this ultimatum

If one is born a woman, much misery
 20. Must one undergo, oh golden damsel!
 He played on flute and it haunts me for e'er.
 My heart on this sinner thinks alway
 And pines, oh golden damsel! know for sure
 What he means; then God is there to judge him.

is ignored, she will like Thirumangaimannan essay to ride the palm-horse to shame the lover and thus coerce him into consenting for an immediate marriage.

In this poem, the slighted dame is deploying her bosom-friend as a messenger to Kannan. She makes a clean breast of her agony and expects Kannan to relent. But then, there is no telling whether Kannan will be moved at all. Old Ponni, a proper judge of men and things has long ago warned her. Kannan according to Ponni, is a pack of lies.

The moaning heroine winds her plaint thus. If Kannan were to really let her down, then God is there to set the matter straight. This is a beautiful touch of piercing pathos.

Well, Kannan, the play-boy is also Kannan the Lord-God. And the mercy of the Lord is infinite indeed.

Notes

Lines 2-3: if only... for us:

This meaning of this passage is this: "If only he (Kannan) chooses to disclose his mind (and if what is disclosed is unfavourable), we will do whatever we deem fit."

The utter helplessness of the damsel's plight is fraught with palpable pathos

Lines 4-5: Spinsters..... our lives:

Hinduism condemns spinsterdom. The institution of nuns is unknown to Hinduism. Jainism and Buddhism which are but the off-shoot of Hinduism permit this. However Sage Thiruvalluvar says in his characteristic way: "The wealth of him that is not spent on the needy is as barren as the withering beauty and charm of a spinster grown gold." *Kural* 1007,

Lines 5-6: tell him.....wide earth:

The damsel is obviously jostled out of her senses. Spinsterhood and marriage cannot co-exist. Perhaps, she desires to capitalise Kannan's jealousy.

Lines 8-9: What blemish..... that:

We have in our Notes to "The Song of the Kuyil" (pages LVII-LVIII) highlighted to some extent the powers of Bharati as a psychologist and psycho-analyst. In these lines is also revealed a subtle psychology. When the husband is attracted by any another woman, this is the very question his wife asks.

Line 10: Love he lit and deserted:

Kannan ignites every devotee into ecstasy. It lasts a while and when the devotee turns selfish, aggressive or possessive, the felt ecstasy effervesces. What was a palpable joy is now less than a straggling memory of a fugitive glimpse. One can well-nigh imagine the plight of the devotee, all robbed of his joy and in consequence sunk in flat despair. The only prayer of the devotee so circumstanced is: "Forsake me not." The despair of St. Manickavaachakar fills several decads.

Lines 10-11: he now lives ... void of shame:

The Lord is above the ken of senses. Indeed He is beyond Vaach and Manas. The Lord is not to be measured by wordly values. According to Gopala Krishna Bharati, the Lord is for him who has shed his "Maanabhimanam" (sense of shame and attachment).

Line 12: He is a pack of lies:

Who can judge the Lord? The Lord alone is Sat. The soul is Sat-Asat. The facts relating to the phenomenal world which is Asat, are indeed a pack of lies. We can call the Lord by any name, so long as our heart is pure. Bhaktas call Him "Kalvan" (Thief) and "Pitthan" (Mad man).

Lines 13-15: Did he ... it all:

The slighted love contemplates black-mail. Will Kannan be intimidated? Has not the heroine stated earlier that Kannan is sans shame. But agony is a harp of many strings and tunes, and aye, all discordant,

Lines 16-18 : His tricks ... damsel :

The heroine appears to be Kshatriya. Her in-born pride finds a tongue to assert itself. She says, she is not a milk-maid (Gopi), but a woman of valour. She is much mistaken. She should turn a milk-maid. Then, and only then, the milk of Kannan's love will bathe her soul in endless felicity.

Lines 19-20 : If one is damsel :

The words in the original defy translation. They are charged with intense pathos. A woman, even if she be a Goddess, is not exempt from a high-strung distress.

V. V. S. Iyer, the "Man of Adamant", the undaunted giant who would not bat an eye-lid in the midst of a myriad horrendous happenings, for once, lost his equipoise when he wrote: "There is a blot in Rama's love ... " Even V. V. S. Iyer could not contain himself when Rama bade Sita enter the fire-pit. பெண் என்று பூமிதனில் பிறந்து விட்டால் பெரும் பீழை இருக்குதடி.

Line 21 : He played . for e'ver :

The flute of Kannan to Vaishnavites is what the Dance of Siva is to the Saivites.

Lines 22-23 : My heart . pines :

The beloved calls her lover a sinner. Strange and mysterious are the ways of love.

See also notes on line 12

Cf. (i) "He suffers not, even for a second, absence
from my bosom ; His feet I hail."

Thiruvaachakam.

(ii) "Come, for I love thee, my Beloved ! yet
Must love thee—canst not choose but love thee ever. "
Gita Govinda, Tr. Sir Edwin Arnold.

Lines 23-24 : Know for sure ... to judge him :

"God is the only help to the utterly lost."

A Tamil adage.

Message : The cure for love is more love.

(7)

கண்ணன் — என் காதலன் (5)

ஆசை முகமறந்து போச்சே — இதை
ஆரிடம் சொல்வேனடி தோழி?
நேச மறக்கவில்லை நெஞ்சம் — எனில்
நினைவு முகமறக்க லாமோ?

கண்ணில் தெரியுதொரு தோற்றம் — அதில்
கண்ண னழகு முழுதில்லை;
நண்ணு முகவடிவு காணில் — அந்த
நல்ல மலர்ச்சிரிப்பைக் காணோம்.

ஓய்வு மொழிதலுமில் லாமல் — அவன்
உறவை நினைத்திருக்கு முள்ளம்;
வாயு முரைப்பதுண்டு கண்டாய் — அந்த
மாயன் புகழினையெப் போதும்.

கண்கள் புரிந்துவிட்ட பாவம் — உயிர்க்
கண்ண னுருமறக்க லாச்சு;
பெண்க ளினத்திலிது போலே — ஒரு
பேதையை முன்புகண்ட துண்டோ?

தேனை மறந்திருக்கும் வண்டும் — ஒளிச்
சிறப்பை மறந்துவிட்ட பூவும்
வாளை மறந்திருக்கும் பயிரும் — இந்த
வைய முழுதுமில்லை தோழி.

கண்ணன் முகமறந்து போனால் -- இந்தக்
கண்க ளிருந்துபய னுண்டோ?

வண்ணப் படமுமில்லை கண்டாய் — இனி

வாழும் வழியென்னடி தோழி?

(7)

Kannan — My Lover (5) ✓

“... but if the sea have lost his saltness,
wherewith, will ye season it?”

New Testament, Mark, V, 13.

I canst not recall the face beloved;
Unto whom shall I this relate, oh friend?
Affection, no doubt, is by heart treasured;
But can memory e'er the face forget?

5. A shape is sure to the eyes visible;
But it lacks the beauty of Kannan;
Though somewhat outlined is the face,
The blooming smile it doth, aye, lack alas!

Nor rest nor respite doth the soul, aye, know

10. For ever doth it dwell on his kinship.
The tongue sure doth alway articulate
The glories of him, aye, the mystic great.

The eyes have sure sinned; they canst not contain
The form of Kannan, aye, my very life.

15. Could you e'er among the race of women
Single out a stupid girl, like this one?

The bee that is of honey unmindful,
The blossom that desires divorce of light,
The crops that choose not, aye, to yearn for rain,—

20. Are nowhere to be eyed in all the world.

If the visage of Kannan be forgot
Of what avail, are these — the silly eyes?
I lack even a portrait beauteous;
How then could I live on, pray, tell me, friend?

Introductory Remarks

"Memory" says Shakespeare is "the warder of the brain". It is indeed the treasure of mind. However we should remember that of all powers of the mind, memory is the most delicate and frail. It is liable to vapourise and effervesce.

Why are some imprints on mind indelible and why some not so? This will lure us into the field of psychology with which we are not familiar. Any way this much can be said. Everything is born of desire. This desire is called "Kaamam". Kaamam is to-day a much-misunderstood word. It meant only desire. "Thou shouldst change our desire for other things (into desire for thee alone)" (Maṛrai Nam kaamankaḷ Maṛru) are the words of Mother Aandaal. "Desire the desire of Him who is without desire; in order to renounce desire, desire that desire" says Thiruvalluvar.

Aasai (ஆசை) is fond desire. Its next higher stage is love (Anbu). Love should bloom into humane grace (Arul). Arul in its highest and sublimated stage is Tyaga (sacrifice, renunciation). In love is implied grace as well as sacrifice.

It is said Dhasarata had only aasai for Rama. Aasai kills. Love vivifies.

The heroine in this poem is a loser as what she entertained was only aasai. However aasai can evolve as love and love too can degenerate into aasai. That which can save is sincerity. It is sincerity which is the virtue of virtues.

Memory plays the truant; the soul is in agony. The outcome is a heart-rending confession, to a friend, dear as soul itself.

Notes

Line 1: I canst not ... beloved :

The writer at the desk, the poet with the stylus, the speaker on the rostrum, have all suffered a similar agony. The word is there somewhere in the sub-conscious; it refuses to surface up or is veiled by hostile forces. It is there and yet not there. Of what avail is all learning? Oh, the curse of Karna!

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Line 2 : Unto whom .. friend ?

This is an unshared agony and one must needs suffer the tortorous flame which is an "ever-burning sulphur unconsumed".

Line 3 : Affection ... treasured :

The heart does its duty. It is the affectionate mother who for ever tends her rebel-child

Line 4 : Can memory ... forget ? :

What a betrayal ! The most unkindest cut of all.

Line 5 : A shape ... visible :

Cf. "Great indeed was the distance betwixt us ;

The form was therefore not discernible ;

My mind dazed, would not from it, part either"

The Song of the Kuyil, Lines 497-499.

Lines 6-8 : But it lacks ... alas :

A gauzy vision which torments more than it pleases. The flaming desire meets with its own corpse.

Lines 9-10 : The mind .. kinship :

The imminent spiritual haemorrhage is thus averted.

Lines 11-12 : The tongue ... great :

A sure panacea ; it never fails

Lines 13-14 : The eyes .. very life :

The reference to eyes is synecdochical Yet one can sin with every limb. The suffering sinner, like Cain, always says :

"My punishment is greater than I can bear." (*Genesis, 5, 13*)

Lines 15-16 : Could you...this one ? :

The heroine suffers from a strange stupidity. Where is the beloved in all the world that cannot recall to her mind the very face of her lover ?

Lines 17-20 : The bee...world :

The bee minus its honey is all sting ; the flower from light divorced is an eidolon ; the crops that resent the rains areicides.

Lines 21-22 : If the visage...eyes :

These are not eyes, but in the language of Thiruvalluvar "two sores in the head".

Lines 23-24 : I lack...friend :

These lines of tender love breathe the agony of utter misery. There is a negation of life itself. This state of absolute helplessness fully qualifies the soul for total surrender.

Message: "The trial of old forgotten thoughts and deeds

Disown the legacy of our buried selves."—*Savitri*

கண்ணன் — என் காந்தன் (6)

கனிகள் கொண்டுதரும் — கண்ணன்
கற்கண்டு போலினிதாய் ;
பனிசெய் சந்தனமும் — பின்னும்
பல்வகை அத்தர்களும்
குனியும் வாண்முகத்தான் — கண்ணன்
குலவி நெற்றியிலே
இனிய பொட்டிடவே — வண்ண
மியன்ற சவ்வாதும்,

கொண்டை முடிப்பதற்கே — மணங்
கூடு தயிலங்களும்,
வண்டு விழியினுக்கு — கண்ணன்
மையுங் கொண்டு தரும் ;
தண்டைப் பதங்களுக்கே — செம்மை
சார்த்துசெம் பஞ்சுதரும் ;
பெண்டிர் தமக்கெல்லாம் — கண்ணன்
பேசருந் தெய்வமடி !

குங்குமம் கொண்டுவரும் — கண்ணன்
குழைத்து மார்பெழுத ;
சங்கையி லாதபணம் — தந்தே
தழுவி மையல் செய்யும் ;
பங்க மொன்றில்லாமல் — முகம்
பார்ந்திருந்தாற் போதும் ;
மங்கள மாகுமடி — பின்னோர்
வருத்த மில்லையடி.

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(8)

Kannan — Our Lover (6) ✓

(A Shakespearian Sonnet)

Fruits sweet as sugar lumps Kannan doth give,
Cool sandal paste and essences varied
From roses distilled, he gives intuitive;
For tilak he gives us civet-indeed,
5. For our tresses, oils odouriferous;
And collyrium for the orbs o' our eyes;
For our jewelled feet to paint glorious
Incarnadine cotton wet that well dyes.
To all women, a god peerless and rare
D. Is Kannan; kunkuma too to us he gives
That we may bright our breasts bedaub and fair;
Endless wealth he gives and in our love lives.
Undistracted let us his face behold
A blessing by which sorrow's death is toll'd.

Introductory Remarks

All of us are born-beggars. We that enter the temple are
greater beggars than those who wait without the temple and are
satisfied with a few paise.

Some are beggars for pelf, some for power, and some
runners for fame. But all are beggars. The Lord Himself is a
dikshaadana. He comes begging our love and like the
universal miser, we will not part with it nor put it to any use.

The institution of mendicancy is a glorious one. "Very
many are the ovens that smoke to appease our hunger" sings
Iiruvilayaadal Puranam. Uncha-Vrutthi is the only proper
Vrutthi for the true Brahmin.

So, a man has a right to beg. Maybe the Lord is mindful
of us and will bless us. Incessant knockings and petitionings
may not appear proper. Yet man has a right to ask. Ask,
and it shall be given. Thevaaram says: "The Lord gives
all very things demanded."

The girls of Kannan look upto Kannan for anything and everything. All their physical needs, cap-a-pie, are met by Kannan. Their locks should be perfumed. Kannan, the best of oil-mongers, comes to their aid. Their feet require dyeing. Lo, Kannan comes with the encrimsoning silk-soft cotton.

Is there a deity like Kannan, the Bhakta-Bhaktiman? He is "Kollak Kuraivilan" (the Infinite that never suffers deficit). Says Maanickavaachakar: "Moola Pandaaram Vazhankukiraan; Vanthu Munthumino" (The Lord of all treasures pours; hasten to elbow your way to the forefront).

The Gopis are soused in the raining gifts of Kannan. Bharati, the Radha, hymns His praise.

Notes

Lines 1-14:

The gifts of Kannan form a luxurious emporium of oriental kickshaws much loved by the teen-aged belles. They sing their gratitude in a fine frenzy.

Line 2. Cool sandal paste:

A perfumed luxury much loved by girls.

Cf. (i) "The bosoms of damsels thick with sandal-paste"
Nala Venba.

(ii) "... sandal-scented leisure" *Sarojini Naidu.*

Lines 2-3: essences . intuitive:

The Indian wife perfumes herself to please the husband.

Cf. "An amber scent of odorous perfume
Her harbinger"

Milton, Samson Agonistes, Lines 720-721

Line 6: Collyrium:

"Collyrium enhances the beauty of the eyes and protects them too. But if applied in excess, the eyes will look ugly and the eye-sight may be impaired." *Dr. Prema Nandakumar,*

"Great men are thus a collyrium to clear our eyes from egotism, and enable us to see other people and their works."

Emerson, Uses of Great Men.

Lines 7-8: For our..... well dyes:

The Indian muse delights to dwell on the softness of the feet of damsels.

"Even the anicha flower and swan's down are as nettle to the feet of this fair one" are the words of Thiruvalluvar. (Tr. V. V. S. Iyer)

They love to dye their feet with red cotton. Kamban says that the feet of Sita were so soft and sensitive that if one merely uttered the word 'cotton', they would turn rubicund. (Panju Ena Sivakkum Men Kaal).

Lines 10-11: Kumkuma..... and fair :

What is referred to here is "thoyyil" (தொய்யில்) i. e., cooling the body in streaks with unguents

cf. "The maiden's spotless bosom is o'erspread
With cooling balsam." *Sakuntala*, Tr. Monier Williams.

Line 12 : Endless wealth lives :

The original reads thus: 'He gives countless money, hugs and dallies with us "

Kannan gives to his devotees not only the "daily bread" but also money in abundance. Money no doubt is said to be the root of all evil. However it need not necessarily be so. We quote below the observations of the X-ray-eyed Master Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar

"The debit and credit sides of occultism were thus well within the range of Mirra's (The Mother's) knowledge and experience. Occultism is certainly liable to be abused, but anything - chemistry, for example, or even language - may be abused. Only if occultism is to be done, one should remember the precautions and correctives."

On the Mother, Vol. I, Page 27.

Lines 13-14: Undistracted..... is toll'd:

One should cultivate this to avert the lament : "I canst not recall the face belov'd Unto whom shall I this relate, friend!"

Message

"But, then, it is unnecessary—it is even foolish and perverse—to subscribe to all enormities of the ascetic denial"

Dr K. R. S. Iyengar, On the Mother. Vol. I, p. 42

கண்ணம்மா — என் காதலி

காட்சி வியப்பு

சுட்டும் விழிச் சுடர்தான் — கண்ணம்மா !
சூரிய சந்திரரோ ?
வட்டக் கரியவிழி — கண்ணம்மா !
வானக் கருமைகொல்லோ ?
பட்டுக் கருநீலப் — புடவை
பதித்த நல்வயிரம்
நட்ட நடுநிசியில் — தெரியும்
நகைத்தி ரங்களிட !

சோலைமல ரொளியோ — உனது
சுந்தரப் புன்னகைதான் ?
நீலக்கட லலையே — உனது
நெஞ்சி லலைகளிட ?
கோலக்குயி லோசை — உனது
குரலி னிமையிட !
வாலைக் குமரியிட — கண்ணம்மா !
மருவக் காதல்கொண்டேன்.

சாத்திரம் பேசுகிறாய் — கண்ணம்மா !
சாத்திர மேதுக்கிட ?
ஆத்திரங் கொண்டவர்க்கே—கண்ணம்மா !
சாத்திர முண்டோடிட ?
முத்தவர் சம்மதியில் — வதுவை
முறைகள் பின்புசெய்வோம் ;
காத்திருப் பேனோடிட ! — இது பார்
கன்னத்து முத்தமொன்று !

Kannamma—My Love (1)

Wonderment of Sight

Kannamma! Kannamma!

Shining orbs are thine eyes —

Are they not sun and moon?

Black and round are thine eyes —

5. Are'nt they heavenly dark?

Silk-blue saree thou wearest

Woven with di-a-monds:

They indeed are the stars

Twinkling at the dead o' night.

10. Kannamma! Kannamma!

' Sit not thy smile of beauty

Light and bloom of Eden?

The billows o' ocean blue

Romp and dance in thy heart.

15. Koel's voice 's sweet indeed;

Whose it is, but thine own!

Virgin sempi-ternal

Oned with thee will I be.

Kannamma! Kannamma!

20. Sastras all from thee pour;

Why do you cite Sastras?

Where is need for them? I say.

When wings o' love waft aloft

Sastras are set at naught.

25. Before all elders great

Our wedding we will have.

Wait I can't, aye, for long

Feel my buss on thy cheek.

Introductory Remarks

"The problem of communication is to convey a sense of the spiritual drama through symbols intelligible to our normal sensibility ... When likewise the soul-Atman relationship is compared to the bride-spouse relationship, there is immediate intelligibility — at least the illusion of intelligibility. But should the madhurabhava be done to excess bordering on sensuality (as for-example, in certain sections of Gita Govinda), the symbol — far from revealing the thing symbolised — can only obscure or pervert it. On the other hand, if the symbol and the thing symbolised are far apart, the reader may stop at the symbol and miss the whole point of the symbolism. The poet's task is, at one and the same time, to make the symbol both itself and what it symbolises. It is like walking on the razor's edge ..."

*Dr. K. R. S. Iyengar, Guru Nanak,
A Homage : Introduction, pages xxxvii - xxxviii.*

In his foreword to the second edition of Bharati's Kannan-Paattu, V. V. S. Iyer says : "But to wield this bhava (of bride-spouse relationship) is a difficult task, like walking on razor's edge. There is a limit. To stray hither and thither beyond that will be stultifying. In Srimad Bhagawata too, in the episode relating to Gopis, Sukha Bhagawan. here and there has exceeded the limit. This is our humble opinion ... Our poet (Bharati) too, while handling this bhava has the accent more on the bodily love-aspect than on supernal bhakti. However, where even Sukha Brahmman could not hold the scales even can we blame our poet for not doing it ?"

Well, did or did not Jaya Deva and Sukha Muni and Bharati conform to the maxim 'meden agan' ? The answers of two giants — men of proven worth, unassailable rectitude and unimpeachable integrity — are there supra. However my own humble opinion tallies not with those of the mighty Leviathans of Literature.

True, I love "Bharati on this of idolatry." It is also true that Bharati — a man of genius and virtue — is but a man. It is again true that man is fallible. Yet according to me, Bharati trod on the razor's edge unhurt.

Writing on Thirukkovaiaar, a poet says :

“ Behold the scriptures ” the Brahmins exclaim ;

“ It is the genesis of Aagamas ”

The Yogis proclaim ; “ It is the Bible

Of Erotica ” say the sensuous ;

“ Mark this work, a Science of Numbers, ” aver

The mathematicians ; “ Tis sheer poetry ”

The poets do exclaim exultingly ;

Lo, the damsel Sitrambalak Kovai

Is thus variously celebrated. ”

I do not subscribe to the view of the poet quoted above, when he says that those who call the Kovai, a Bible of Erotica, are the sensuous ones. If to an honest mind, the work sounds erotic, he has every right to say so — more so — when he is sharply alive to the meaning and purpose of the poem. So, both V. V. S. Iyer and Dr. K. R. S. Iyengar have expressed their opinions undauntedly, for our edification only. They have warned us of the danger inherent in such poetry. Perhaps that is also what is meant by the poet on the Kovai.

Both V. V. S. Iyer and Dr. Iyengar are of the tribe of Sakkira (-may their tribe increase-) and they voice forth that is truth according to them. What is more, we can safely lean on them as these have the power to bear a whole world on their back.

Yet I say that my eyes have not detected any trespass by Bharati. Bharati is a Sakta. His writings may mystify us.

Or perhaps, what is excess for a super-sensitive soul is insufficiency for a dullard soul.

In making his deity his beloved, Bharati appears to follow sufis too, in their footsteps.

Notes

Lines 2-3: Shining orbs.....moon ? :

According to the Vedas the Sun and Moon are the eyes of the Lord.

Line 5: heavenly dark :

This darkness purifies.

Cf. (i) "O deep and sweet darkness ! the profound and mystic darkness, whose servant I was."

Tagore, The King of the Dark Chamber.

(ii) "Sudharsana : How could that beauty fascinate me ? Oh, what shall I do

to purge my eyes of their pollution ?

Surangama : You will have to wash them in that bottomless darkness;" *Ibid.*

Lines 6-9: Silk-blue night :

Cf. (i) In Sartor Resartus (Book 1, chapter 8,)

Carlyle quotes Goethe who calls Nature, "the living visible garment of God."

(ii) "God is seen God

In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul and the clod." *Browning, Saul, st. 17.*

(iii) Deus aeternus, arte sua, quae natura est.
(Nature is the art of God)

Dante, *De Monarchia*, Book i, l. 3.

(iv) "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork."

O. T. Psalms, xix, 1.

Lines 11-16: ' Sit not.....thine own :

The grace of God is writ large in Nature. However there is no point in praising the work ignoring the Author. So it is, Browning says :

"What I call God, And fools call Nature."

God manifests in Nature. Young (Night Thoughts, Night ix, l. 1005) says : "Nature is the glass reflecting God."

Cf. (i) "Go thou and seek the House of Prayer !

I to the woodlands wend, and there

In lovely Nature see the God of Love."

Southey.

God of Love for Bharati is Kannamma.

Cf. (ii) "What man has written, man may read

But God fills every root and seed

With cryptic words, too strangely set

For mortals to decipher yet."

Charles Dalmon.

Lines 20-21 : Why do you... .. I say :

The same philosophy is advocated by the Hunter in "Thikkuth Theriyaatha Kaattil". But what a difference ! Bhaktas call Kannan a thief and a mad man. These are words of highest praise. Sisupaala uses the very words of the Bhaktas. But what is praise from the mouth of the Bhakta is calumny when uttered by Sisupaala.

Lines 23-24: When wings..... at naught :

How true !

Lines 24-25 : Before..... will have :

The institution of marriage is divine in origin. It can be postponed. It cannot be ignored or jumped. The great commentator Nacchinaarkiniyar, commenting on the words "Kattazhal Kaamath Theeyaal Kanniyai Kalakkinaanum" (he that violates a virgin impelled by blazing lust) says: "He that violates and does not set it straight by subsequent marriage."

Lines 27-28: Wait I can't ... thy cheek :

What is bargained for is an earnest—the betrothed lover's permissible right. Maybe this too is a trespass; but it is venial. It is not a monstrous sin, but a peccadillo. De minimis non curat lex, is a legal maxim.

Cf. "There would I give you a token of my love."

The Song of Songs, 7:12. Tr. L. Waterman.

கண்ணம்மா — என் காதலி (2)

(பின்னே வந்து நின்று கண் மறைத்தல்)

மாலைப் பொழுதிலொரு மேடைமிசையே
வானையுங் கடலையு நோக்கியிருந்தேன்
மூலைக் கடலினையவ் வானவனையம்
முத்தமிட் டேதழுவிமுகிழ்த்தல் கண்டேன் ;
நீல நெருக்கிடையில் நெஞ்சு செலுத்தி
நேரங் கழிவதிலு நினைப்பின்றியே
சாலப் பலபலநற் பகற்களவில்
தன்னை மறந்தலயந் தன்னிலிருந்தேன்.

ஆங்கப் பொழுதிலென் பின்புறத்திலே
ஆள்வந்து நின்றெனது கண்மறைக்கவே,
பாங்கினிற் கையிரண்டும் தீண்டியறிந்தேன் ;
பட்டுடை வீசுகமழ் தன்னிலறிந்தேன் ;
ஓங்கி வருமுவகை யூற்றிலறிந்தேன் ;
ஓட்டு மிரண்டுளத்தின் தட்டிலறிந்தேன் ;
“வாங்கி விடிகையை யேடிகண்ணம்மா,
மாய மெவரிடத்தில் ”? என்று மொழிந்தேன்.

சிரித்த ஒலியிலவள் கைவிலக்கியே,
திருமித் தழுவி, “என்ன செய்திசொல்” என்றேன் ;
“நெரித்த திரைக்கடலில் என்னகண்டிட்டாய் ?
நீல விசும்பினிடை என்ன கண்டிட்டாய் ?
திரித்த நுரையினிடை என்ன கண்டிட்டாய் ?
சின்னக் குமிழிகளில் என்ன கண்டிட்டாய் ?
பிரித்துப் பிரித்துநித மேகமளந்தே
பெற்ற நலங்களென்ன ? பேசுதி” என்றாள்.

“நெரித்த திரைக்கடலில் நின்முகங் கண்டேன் ;
நீல விசும்பினிடை நின்முகங் கண்டேன் ;
திரித்த நுரையினிடை நின்முகங் கண்டேன் ;
சின்னக் குமிழிகளில் நின்முகங் கண்டேன் ;
பிரித்துப் பிரித்து நித மேகமளந்தே,
பெற்றதுன் முகமன்றிப் பிறிதொன்றில்லை ;
சிரித்த ஒலியினிலுன் கைவிலக்கியே
திருமித் தழுவியதில் நின்முகங் கண்டேன்.”

Kannamma—My Love (2)**(Blindfolding from behind)**

In a pavilion sat I, one eve

Casting my looks on the sky and the sea;

The parabolic sky and edge of sea

Hugged and kissed and each the other mated;

5. By the dense blue thick was my heart absorbed

And time passed away unnoticed by me;

A good many reveries me enthralled

And oblivious was I of myself.

Then it was that some one did close my eyes

10. Standing as it were, aye, just behind me;

I felt the familiar hands and did know;

I inhaled the silken scent and did know;

By inly soaring delight I did know;

By the thud of dovetail'd heart, I did know.

15. "Take off thy hands from me Oh Kannamma!

I am by thy magic undeceived" quoth I.

As she burst in glee, I freed her hold,

Turned and hugged and said: "What may the

news be?"

"What dost thou see in the smashing breakers?

20. What dost thou see in the heaven's azure?

What dost thou see in the spume and the foam?

What dost thou see in the petty bubbles?

What boots it to daily dissect yon clouds

And them study, part by part? pray, tell me."

25. I beheld thy face in the smashing breakers;

I beheld thy face in heaven's azure;

I beheld thy face in the spume and foam;

I beheld thy face in petty bubbles;

In my daily dissection of yon clouds

30. I beheld thy face and naught else at all;

When in glee thou didst burst, I turned myself

And hugged thee and beheld thy face only.

கண்ணம்மா — என் காதலி (3)

முகத்திரை களைதல்

தில்லித் துருக்கர்செய்த வழக்கமடை — பெண்கள்
திரையிட்டு முகமலர் மறைத்துவைத்தல் ;
வல்லியிடையினையும் ஒங்கிமுன் னிற்கும் — இந்த
மார்பையு முடுவது சாத்திரங் கண்டாய் ;
வல்லி யிடையினையும் மார்பிரண்டையும் — துணி
மறைத்தத னுலமுகு மறைந்ததில்லை ;
சொல்லித் தெரிவதில்லை மன்மதக்கலை — முகச்
சோதி மறைத்துமொரு காதலிங்குண்டோ ?

ஆரியர் முன்னெறிகள் மேன்மையென்கிறாய் -- பண்டை
ஆரியப் பெண்களுக்குத் திரைகளுண்டோ ?
ஓரிரு முறைகண்டு பழகியபின் — வெறும்
ஒப்புக்குக் காட்டுவதில் நாணமென்னடை !
யாரிருந் தென்னையிங்கு தடுத்திடுவார் — வலு
வாக முகத்திரையை யகற்றிவிட்டால் ?
காரிய மில்லையடி வீண்பசப்பிலே — கனி
கண்டவன் தோலுரிக்கக் காத்திருப்பேனா ?

Introductory Remarks

With the advent of Muslims, the custom of veiling became
rife among the women of North India. This is condemned
Bharati as Un-Aryan. A woman's body has to be covered from
neck to foot. This is Sastraic injunction. And here Bharati
seems to gratefully remember the famous Vaishnavite

KANNAMMA—MY LOVE (3) ✓

(Removal of Veil)

'Tis the consuetude with Delhi Muslims
To keep the lotus-face with veil covered ;
The liana-waist and the jutting breast
Are to be veiled, as Sastras so prescribe.

5. By veiling the breast and liana-waist
Beauty is not under a bushel hid ;
Cupidry is not taught by word of mouth ;
Can love flourish behind a veiled visage ?

" Noble " you say " are Aryan customs old " ;

10. Did ever Aryan dames their faces veil ?
Having met more than once and love exchanged
Wherefore this coy persistence—all formal ?

Who will aye, dare essay, me to obstruct
If by force I pluck the veil from your face ?

15. Of what avail is pretension idle ?
Can e'er rind of fruit the eater defy ?

commentator Parimelazhakar who says : "துகிலாண் மறைத்தல்
நாணுடை மகளிர்க்கு இயல்பு ... " (To cover by robe becomes
the modesty of woman). But then any extra veiling is cumbrous
and the lover resents it. Beauty unadorned is best adorned,

The Bard of Avon says "...women are light at midnight." Pun apart, the beloved is truly the lover's light. He will not suffer his light to pale.

The poem ends with a bang for which Bharati is justly celebrated.

Notes

Lines 1-2 : 'Tis the.....covered:

Bharati is a lover of all mankind. Hatred is unknown to him. He does not condemn Muslims. He only says customs differ and the custom of one is another's poison.

Lines 3-4 : The liana-waist..... so prescribe:

Bharati generally upholds Sastras. He derides them sometimes not without cause.

Lines 5-6 : By veiling.....hid :

A lover should never become a voluptuary. He should be a symbol of masculine dignity.

Lines 7-8 : Cupidry...veiled visage :

To the truth posited by the above lines, the very life of Rishyasringa Muni bears eloquent testimony.

Lines 11-12: Having metall formal :

According to the learned commentator Bharadwaji Nacchi naarkiniar, the spoken words of a woman are always to be styled as 'lispings' (मृदुत्व). The natural reserve of a woman manifests ab incunabilis. It is part of her character. This trait adds to her queenly stature.

Lines 13-14 : Who will..... face ?

It is the privilege of the beloved to demand courting for ever. And as Thiruvalluvar says : "The door that is bolted with the bolt of modesty will yet yield to the axe of an overpowering love". (Tr. V. V. S. Iyer). A good wife expects her husband to overpower her. She keeps her longing as a secret and expects her husband to storm her secrecy.

Lines 15-16 : Of What avail eater defy ?

The nettled lover is impatient. Pouting lips, indignant eyes, sulking, are all meant to ignite the lover. The intelligent wife knows how to wield her weapon—bouderie.

கண்ணம்மா—என் காதலி (4)

நாணிக் கண் புதைத்தல்

மன்னர் குலத்தினிடைப் பிறந்தவளை—இவன்
மருவ நிகழ்ந்ததென்று நாணமுற்றதோ ?
சின்னஞ் சிறு குழந்தை என்ற கருத்தோ ? — இங்கு
செய்யத் தகாத செய்கை செய்தவருண்டோ ?
வன்ன முகத்திரையை களைந்திடென்றேன் — நின்றன்
மதங்கண்டு துகிலினை வலி துரிந்தேன்.
என்ன கருத்திலடி கண்புதைக்கிருய் ? — எனக்
கெண்ணப் படுவதில்லை யேடி கண்ணம்மா !

கன்னி வயதிலுனைக் கண்டதில்லையோ ? — கன்னங்
கன்றிச் சிவக்கமுத்த மிட்டதில்லையோ ?
அன்னியமாக நம்முள் எண்ணுவதில்லை, — இரண்
டாவியுமொன் ரூகுமெனக் கொண்டதில்லையோ ?
பன்னிப் பலவுரைகள் சொல்லுவதென்னே ? — துகில்
பறித்தவன் கைபறிக்கப் பயங்கொள்வனோ ?
என்னைப் புறமெனவுங் கருதுவதோ ? கண்கள்
இரண்டினி லொன்றை யொன்று கண்டு வெள்குமோ ?

நாட்டினிற் பெண்களுக்கு நாயகர் சொல்லும் — சுவை
தைந்த பழங்கதைகள் நானுரைப்பதோ ?
பாட்டுஞ் சுதியுமொன்று கலந்திடுங்கால் — தம்முட்
பன்னி யுபசரணை பேசுவதுண்டோ ?
நீட்டுங் கதிர்களொடு நிலவுவந்தே — விண்ணை
நின்று புகழ்ந்துவிட்டுப் பின்மருவுமோ ?
மூட்டும் விறகினையச் சோதிகவ்வுங்கால் — அவை
முன்னுப சாரவகை மொழிந்திடுமோ ?

சாத்திரக் காரரிடம் கேட்டுவந்திட்டேன் : — அவர்
சாத்திரம் சொல்லியதை நினக்குரைப்பேன் ;
நேற்று முன்னுளில் வந்த உறவன்றி ; — மிக
நெடும் பண்டைக் காலமுதல் நேர்ந்து வந்ததாம்.
போற்றுமி ராமனென முன்புதித்தனை ; அங்கு
பொன்மிதி லைக்கரசன் பூமடந்தை நான் ;

Kannamma — My Love (4)

(Covering the face with palms in shame)

“Sans beginning is Thine union with me” — *Nammaazhwaar*.

Art thou oh, by shame assailed as this one
Had durst make love to a royal princess?
Dost thou think that thou art but an infant?
Did any here behave unbecoming?

5. ‘Take off the veil from thy face,’ I did say;
I knew thy pride, so by force pluck’d the veil;
Wherefore shouldst thou, thy face with palms cover?
I canst not this comprehend, Kannamma!

I have seen thee into a virgin bloom
And aye, kissed thy cheeks to incarnadine;
Our mutual love knows not otherness,
Our spirits are one; you and I am one.
Wherefore indulge in very many words?
He that pluck’d your veil, — would he fear your hands
To disengage? Am I a stranger deemed?
Doth ever one eye at the other blush?

In this country, husbands entertain
Their wives with old juiceless tales; I will not
Them ape; when song and sruti are married
Will they each the other greet and curtsy?
Doth e’er the moon with its rays expansive
Praise the sky ere it ‘gins to skim therein?
When flame is about to leap on fuel
Are they by curtsy ever bother’ed?

From the soothsayers in Sastras well-versed
What I have heard, I will relate to thee.
The nexus betwixt us is nothing new,
It originates from the ancient past;
When thou wert the celebrated Rama
Who was the golden Mythili, but me?

ஊற்றமு தென்னவொரு வேயங்குழல் கொண்டோன் கண்ணன்
உருவ நினக்கமையப் பார்த்தனங்கு நான் ;

முன்னே மிகப்பழமை யிரணியனும்—எந்தை
மர்க்கந் தவிர்க்க வந்த நரசிங்க னீ !
முன்னையொர் புத்தனென நான் வளர்ந்திட்டேன்—ஒளிப்
பணமை அசோதரையென் றுன்னே யெய்தினேன்.
சான்னவர் சாத்திரத்தில் மிகவல்லவர்காண் ;—அவர்
சால்லிற் பழுதிருக்கக் காரணமில்லை ;
இன்னுங் கடைசிவரை ஒட்டிருக்குமாம் ;—இதில்
தகுக்கு நாணமுற்றுக் கண்புதைப்பதே !

Introductory Remarks

“ It is not for the trinket—tambourine, that we woo Thee,
Oh Govinda ! For ever and ever do we seek union with Thee ”
Oymned Aandaal the Naachiyaar.

God's union with the soul is beginningless. His
omnipresence cannot suffer a moment's separation from the
soul. However, who but the enlightened are aware of this ? The
divine-human-continuum goes on for ever, whether one is aware
of it or not. In the words of Triloka-Sitaram, this relationship
was there before the beginning and will continue to be there
after the end of the end. Beginningless and endless is the Love
of the Lord for the Soul, the Love of Naraayana for the Nara.

Language is after all a rational convention; it is inadequate
to meet the mysteries of Love. But love-poetry is a sort of
Chin-mudra and by beyonding language, serves as a pointer of
the ineffable. This poetry which to begin with is physical,
grows extra-physical, reaches the metaphysical and ultimately
manifests as a pure flame of ecstasy burning all that is earth
earthy, meum et tuum. This is an anubhava and is called
adwaitam by the Upanishad. Says Bharati : “ Our spirits are
one ”. Adwaitam cannot be expressed in words. Once words
are uttered dwaitam sets in with a vengeance with its infinite
ramifications.

When thou wert Kannan of nectarean flute
I indeed was his friend true, Paarthan great.

I incarnated once as Hiranya's son,
His violence as Narsing thou didst quell.

35. Then as the Buddha I came to be born,
Thou wert then my bride, Yasodhara bright.
These I heard from pundit-lips o' sastras great.
Their veracious words can never go wrong.
Unto the last will this last, our union ;

40. Wherefore shouldst thou, cover thy face in shame ?

Strange indeed is man's predicament. And stranger indeed is his insensitivity to his predicament. No wonder life stands robbed of "all golden meanings". The "story of soul is for ever unfinished".

Unto the last will this last, our union ;

Wherefore shouldst thou cover thy face in shame ?

Notes

Lines 1-2 :

Ambika is Maya, the obverse of Brahmam, called "Prakasa" in Saaktam.

Maya is "Vimarsa" the imminence of creativity, the first flutter of Brahmam if it may be so described. (Prakasa Swarupasya Para-Brahmmanah naisargiga pradhama sphranam)

"The Great Mother" says Sir John Woodroffe, "Who exists in all the forms of Tantras and all Yantras, is, as the Lalita says, the "unsullied treasure-house of beauty"; the Sapphire-Devi, whose slender waist, bending beneath the burden of the ripe fruit of her breasts, swells into jewelled hips heavy with the promise of infinite maternities." (Introduction to Tantra Shastra, pages 14-15)

Maya is also called Maya-Yavanika (Mayic veil). This hides the Brahmam. This veil has to be torn. It is not self-destructive. In other words, Godhead does not shed it. It has to be torn.

The hero tears it.

And here Bharati introduces an anthropomorphic touch, a common reflex action on the part of the beloved. Naanikken Puthaitthal (Covering the eyes as in shame) is a well-established ford in the river of Tamil Literature.
Lines 1-2: Art thou...princess:

The esoteric fruit is always liable to be hid in a leafy luxuriance of anthropomorphism. Godhead by its very nature is unnameable. Yet we hail the Lord in a thousand names. God is above caste or race or religion. Yet Hinduism, Christianity and Islam each has its exclusive claim of monopoly on God.

God is at once the most unapproachable and the most easy of access. He is Oreb as well as Sinai. So the jiva-gat like a ponderous pendulum has ever to "to-and-fro" betwixt plus infinity and minus infinity.

The God of the Hindus assumes a body at His will and consents to spend His days among men. Rama, the Kshatriya and Krishna the King of Yadavas did wield their sceptre, in India that is Bharat. This indeed is kenosis.

When Rama the God ruled his subjects as a King, he chose to enforce the laws of Manu which had everything to do with the caste-system. "Just indeed are the ways of the Lord and let us "tax not divine disposal."

"Just are the ways of God
And justifiable to men"

The bouderie of the divine beloved taxes the lover and through the rushlights of his mind, he tries to glimpse a cause
Lines 3-4: Dost thou...unbecoming?:

These are the very questions put by Muruka to Valli.

Prof. A. Srinivasa Raghavan's translation is as follows :

"Or do you think I am only a weanling

Too young for woman's love?

Lines 5-6 : "Take off...the veil :

Prof. A. Srinivasa Raghavan's translation runs thus :

"As in a passion of longing, drunk with your beauty

I tear your coloured veil asunder"

Madham means pride, arrogance, hauteur. It also means venerial heat or fury.

'நின்றன்மதம்' in the context means "Your hauteur'.

Lines 7-8 : Wherefore..... Kannamma :

Compare, or rather contrast : வைவேற் கண்புதைத்துப்
பொன்னே ! என்னைநீ வாழச்செய்தாய்.

(You covered your sharp eyes, oh Gold !

Thus did you my life save) *Thirukkovaiyaar, St. 43.*

Line 11 : Our mutual otherness :

This is adwaitam according Saiva Siddhanta.

"..... being not other (than Hara), reaches, Hara's feet".

Sivagnanna-Bodham, Sutra 8, Tr. Gordon Matthews.

Line 12 : Our spirits are one; you and I am one".

Cf. (i) "Spirit can alone know spirit"

Page 4, Introduction to Tantra Sastra.

(ii) "..... Rosalind lacks then the love

Which teacheth thee that thou and I am one"

As you Like It, 1, 3, Lines 93-94.

Line 15 : Am I a stranger deemed ?

Line 11 says: "Our mutual love knows not otherness".

Lines 17-19: In this ape :

Cf. (i) "Life is as tedious as a twice-told tale

King John, 3, 4, 108.

(ii) "And what so tedious as a twice-told tale?.

Homer, Odyssey, Book XII, Last Line.

In the occident the wife seems to be the problem.

Cf. (i) The Old Wives Tale, Title of a play by George Peele.

(ii) "Old wives ! foolish tales of Robin Hood."

Erasmus, Adagia.

But Bharati's tale will cure deafness

Line 19 : sruti :

The pitch for key-note in singing. Prof. A. S. R. says that sruti is the ground-note serving as the base for Indian melodies.

Lines 19-24 : ... When song ... bothered : and

Line 16 : Doth ever .. blush :

These would be benevolence in trifles.

Vergil's "Omnibus idem" (To all men the same) is inapplicable to lovers.

Lines 25-36 : From the ... bright :

Cf. "I was Euphorbus at the siege of Troy."

Pythagorus.

See also Page XLI, Notes, The Song of the Kuyil, Bharati-Pancharatna Series No. 2.

In this poem Bharati illustrates the Platonic doctrine of anamnesis.

Line 38 : These ... wrong :

Cf. " The great Seer with wisdom unerring ... "

The Song of the Kuyil, Line 794.

Line 39 : Unto the last ... our union :

Cf. " O blemishless Govinda ! our kinship

With Thee can ne'er averruncated be ! "

Aandaal, Thiruppaavai, St. 29.

Line 40 : Wherefore ... shame ?

Cf. Ma Kooroo manini manamaye.

(My proud one, do not indulge in scorn).

Gita Govinda.

Message : Enru ulai Nee Anru ulam yaam.

(You and we are co-eternal).

Thaayumaanavar.

(13)

கண்ணம்மா — என் காதலி (5)

(குறிப்பிடம் தவறியது)

தீர்த்தக் கரையினிலே—தெற்கு மூலையில்
செண்பகத் தோட்டத்திலே,
பார்த்திருந் தால்வருவேன்—வெண்ணிலாவிலே
பாங்கியோ டென்றுசொன்னாய்.
வார்த்தை தவறிவிட்டாய் — அடி கண்ணம்மா !
மார்பு துடிக்குதடி !
பார்த்த விடத்திலெல்லாம் — உன்னைப் போலவே
பாவை தெரியுதடி !

மேனி கொதிக்குதடி — தலைசுற்றியே
வேதனை செய்குதடி !
வானி லிடத்தையெல்லாம் — இந்த வெண்ணிலா
வந்து தழுவுதுபார்.
மோனத் திருக்குதடி — இந்த வையகம்
மூழ்கித் துயிலினிலே
நானொருவன் மட்டிலும் — பிரிவென்பதோர்
நரகத் துழலுவதோ?

கடுமை யுடையதடி — எந்தநேரமும்
காவலுன் மாளிகையில் ;
அடிமை புகுந்தபின்னும் — எண்ணும்போதுநான்
அங்கு வருவதற்கில்லை ;
கொடுமை பொறுக்கவில்லை — கட்டுங்காவலும்
கூடிக் கிடக்குதங்கே ;
நடுமை யரசியவன் — எதற்காகவோ
நாணிக் குலைந்திடுவான்

கூடிப் பிரியாமலே — ஓரிராவெலாம்
கொஞ்சிக் குலவியங்கே
ஆடி விளையாடியே, — உன்றன்மேனியை
ஆயிரங் கோடிமுறை
நாடித் தழுவிமனக் — குறைதீர்ந்துநான்
நல்ல களியெய்தியே
பாடிப் பரவசமாய் — நிற்கவேதவம்
பண்ணிய தில்லையடி !

(13)

Kannamma — My Love (5)

(Failure to tryst)

“Radha, petulant
Sang soft impatience and half-earnest fears”
Gita Govinda, Tr. Sir Edwin Arnold.

“Come I would with my friend in the moon-light
To our wonted tryst — the southern corner
Of Champaka-grove nigh the water-bund”
So you said and failed to keep, aye, your word.

5. Alas! my heart goes pit-a-pat and lo!
Your phantom fills ev'ry spot my eyes behold.

On fire 's my body; aches and reels my head;
Behold the moon embracing all heaven;
A solemn stillness doth all things pervade;

10. The whole earth, aye, unconscious slumbereth.
I alone am awake, oh wallowing
In pangs infernal of separation.

Fierce is the watch that they keep away
About your mansion; I am a serf there

15. And yet canst not enter it at my will;
Horrendous and forbidding 's the vigil
That they keep there. An upright queen is she;
And why should she wilt in shame, and languish?

All through a night suffering none o' parting

20. To blandish, dally, play and dance with you,
The while embracing you a billion times
Longingly, steeped full in bliss, clean cured of
Mind's yearning and to sing in rapture sweet —
Tapas I have not wrought, oh my darling!

Introductory Remarks.

Man has no stomach for disappointment though fate every now and then forces it through his gullet. It is a disappointed man who is always disappointed. From disappointment man seldom learns a lesson. He expects and meets with disappointment, chews ashes instead of fruit and never gives up expectation which unfailingly supplies him buckets and buckets of bitter ashes.

"And still they dream that they shall still succeed
And still are disappointed"

Cowper.

This is so at the human level. At the divine level, disappointment chastens.

The divine may deign to have a tryst with the soul. The soul awaits the advent, feels it in every pore as it were, and is ineffably thrilled. As St. Manickavaachakar says :

"Though I've imbibed I comprehend it not
Like flowing billows swell from out of the sea of milk
Within my soul He made deep waters rise,
Ambrosia surpassing speech filled every pore."

Tr. G. U. Pope.

The divine trysts, after sometime, become trials, when the divine plays hide-and-seek with the soul. The pangs of separation become sharp and gain edge day by painful day. "Forsake me not" cries the soul in anguish and falls into a desponding and well-nigh despairing state of mind. Even the Psalter and the Messiah had to undergo this ordeal. "Eloi Eloi lama Sabachthani" (My God ! My God ! Why hast Thou forsaken me?). Vidaiyavane Vittidudhi Kandaai" (O Siva ! Forsake me not !)

However, "on the other hand, Mirra (The Mother) feels that the difficulties of physical unease are greatly overestimated and "what fatigues the most is the anticipation", the anxiety, the exaggerated fear."

Dr. K. R. S. Iyengar, On the Mother, page 80.

But then when a session with the Sublime is deferred, could it be done without loss of blood? Any way the evolved soul blames itself and none else.

"Tapas I have not wrought, oh my darling !"

Notes

Lines 1-5 : Come I would ... your word :

Cf. " False, fragrant, fatal ! Krishna's quest is o'er
By Jumna's shore ! "

Gita Govinda, Tr. Sir Edwin Arnold.

Line 5 : my heart goes pit-a-pat :

The hero mourns more than he blames.

Line 6 : Your phantom ... beheld :

Cf. " With a heart rifled by the barbs of Cupid
I beheld nought but a myriad forms
Of the pretty Kuyil of the leafy grove :
It was here ; it was there ; it was ev'rywhere
In the world ... "

The Song of the Kuyil, Lines 167-171.

Line 7 : On fire .. head :

Cf. " spirit-weary, mind-lorn, body-aching "

Eric Partridge.

Line 8 : Beheld ... heaven :

Cf. " O lamp of love ! art thou the lover's friend,
And wilt thou not bring him "

Gita Govinda, Tr. Sir Edwin Arnold.

Line 9 : A solemn ... pervade :

See notes for line 74, The Song of the Kuyil.

Line 10 : The whole ... slumber'eth :

Cf. " At dead of night whilst e'en the robber sleeps "

Bharati, Kannan — My Lover (2).

Line 11 : I alone am awake :

The words are Tennyson's. Vide Oenone.

Lines 13-18 : Fierce ... languish ? :

The tantalising expectation may coin excuses, real as well as chimerical, for the delay.

Lines 19-24 : All through ... darling :

The prayer is for the blending of life with Life, the making of Oneness for ever.

Message : Krishna the omniscient, is the all-forgetful.

கண்ணம்மா என் காதலி (6)

(யோகம்)

1. பாயுமொளி நீ யெனக்கு,
 பார்க்கும் விழி நானுனக்கு ;
 தோயுமது நீ யெனக்கு,
 தும்பியடி நானுனக்கு ;
 வாயுரைக்க வருகுதில்லை,
 வாழிநின்றன் மேன்மையெல்லாம் ;
 தூயசுடர் வானொளியே !
 சூறையமுதே ! கண்ணம்மா !
2. வீணையடி நீ யெனக்கு,
 மேவும்விரல் நானுனக்கு ;
 பூணும்வட நீ யெனக்கு,
 புதுவயிர நானுனக்கு
 காணுமிடந் தோறு நின்றன்
 கண்ணி:னொளி வீசுதட ;
 மாணுடைய பேரரசே !
 வாழ்வுநிலையே ! கண்ணம்மா !
3. வானமழை நீ யெனக்கு,
 வண்ணமயில் நானுனக்கு ;
 பானமடி நீ யெனக்கு,
 பாண்டமடி நானுனக்கு,
 ஞானவொளி வீசுதட,
 நங்கைநின்றன் சோதிமுகம் ;
 ஊனமறு நல்லழகே !
 ஊறுசுவையே ! கண்ணம்மா !
4. வெண்ணிலவு நீ யெனக்கு,
 மேவுகடல் நானுனக்கு ;
 பண்ணுசுதி நீ யெனக்கு,
 பாட்டினிமை நானுனக்கு,
 எண்ணியெண்ணிப் பார்த்திடிலோர் ;
 எண்ணமில்லை நின்சுவைக்கே ;
 கண்ணின்மணி போன்றவளே !
 கட்டியமுதே ! கண்ணம்மா

(14)

Kannamma—My Love (6)

(Yoga)

- Oh flowing light art thou to me
Beholding eye am I to thee;
Oh nectar sweet art thou to me
The bee that sips, am I to thee;
5. Extolling words I lack alas !
I will hail thee yet, oh my lass !
Oh heavenly light unsullied
Kannamma, my julep honied !
- Thou art to me Veena 'witching
10. I'm to thee the finger touching;
Ornate necklace thou art to me
Diamonds new I am to thee;
Wheresoever to look I turn
Thy eyes it is that light emit;
15. O majesty venerable,
Kannamma ! Life adorable !
- Rain of nimbi thou art to me
Peacock comely I am to thee;
Syrup flavoured thou art to me
20. Holding chalice I am to thee;
Thy face is wrought of purest light
From whence is flooding wisdom bright
Kannamma, my beauty flawless
Fount of nectar, ever ceaseless.
25. Moonlight argent thou art to me
Soaring ocean I am to thee;
Thou to me the tune of music
I to thee, the mel'dy basic;
I think and think and think only
30. But nev'r know thy charm womanly
Kannamma, my pupil of eye,
Can ever nectar with thee vie ?

Vinay Avasthi Sahib Bhuvan Vani Trust Donations
5. வீசுகமழ நீ யெனக்கு,

வீரியுமலர் நானுனக்கு ;
பேசுபொருள் நீ யெனக்கு,
பேணுமொழி நானுனக்கு ;
நேசமுள்ள வான்சுடரே ;
நின்னழகை யேதுரைப்பேன் ?
ஆசைமது வே, கனியே,
அள்ளுசுவையே ! கண்ணம்மா !

6. காதலடி நீ யெனக்கு,
காந்தமடி நானுனக்கு
வேதமடி நீ யெனக்கு,
வித்தையடி நானுனக்கு
போதமுற்ற போதினிலே
பொங்கிவருந் தீஞ்சுவையே !
நாதவடி வானவளே !
நல்லவுயிரே கண்ணம்மா !

7. நல்லவுயிர் நீ யெனக்கு,
நாடியடி நானுனக்கு
செல்வமடி நீ யெனக்கு,
சேமநிதி நானுனக்கு,
எல்லையற்ற பேரழகே !
எங்குநிறை பொற்சுடரே !
மூல்லைநிகர் புன்னகையாய் !
மோதுமின்பமே ! கண்ணம்மா !

8. தாரையடி நீ எனக்கு,
தண்மதிய நானுனக்கு ;
வீரமடி நீ யெனக்கு,
வெற்றியடி நானுனக்கு ;
தாரணியில் வானுலகில்,
சார்ந்திருக்கு மின்பமெல்லாம்
ஒருருவ மாய்ச்சமைந்தாய் !
உள்ளமுதே ! கண்ணம்மா !

- Wafting fragrance art thou to me
 Blowing blossom I am to thee ;
 35. Thou art to me the soul of thought
 And I to thee, the word it wrought.
 Endearing ray, oh ethereal
 Beyond words is thy beauty real ;
 Kannamma ! Desire's wine divine,
 40. Ravishing charm and sheen o' sunshine.

- A well of love thou art to me
 Drawing magnet am I to thee ;
 Thou art to me the Veda pure
 I am to thee the knowledge sure.
 45. At the hour when dawneth Wisdom
 Thou dost usher in Joy's Freedom.
 O Kannamma, the seed of life
 The form of sound in thee is rife.

- O goodly life thou art to me
 50. Artery pulsing I to thee ;
 Abundant riches thou to me
 Saving knowledge I am to thee ;
 O pulchritude that knows no bound
 O golden ray everywhere found.
 55. O Kannamma of smile winning
 Pleasance of joy ever running.

- The stars of sky art thou to me
 The moon of coolth am I to thee ;
 Valour in sooth art thou to me
 60. Victory sure I am to thee ;
 All the joys of Heaven and Earth
 In thee beloved take their birth ;
 Lovely art thou, compact of joys
 In thee — my nectar, I rejoice.

Introductory Remarks.

C. R. Reddy and K. S. Venkataramani in their Foreword to the English works of Bharati say: "The Tamil genius rejoices in scholarship, in clearness and purity, and in the incisive analysis of its own precious accumulations. Where it is creative it becomes **metaphysical**, laden with a rapture whose significance and pleasure are only to the chosen few who have transcended the mind-consciousness. Our songs even in their most lyrical moments have always the **mystic touch**. The quest after the Eternal gives our melodies a stellar gleam."

They also say in their notes to this very poem that the depiction of Krishna here as the lady-love is a boldness of imagination characteristic of Bharati.

Bharati's own blurb to this poem runs as follows. "In the following verses the Supreme Divinity styled here "Krishna", is imaged as the beloved woman and the human soul as the lover."

We are not sure whether the English poem entitled "In Each Other's Arms" or the Tamil beginning with the words "Paayumoli nee enakku", is the original. Be that as it may.

C. R. Reddy and K. S. Venkataramani affirm thus: "This intense longing for the Divine is visible in every song and every page of this collection " The collection is contained in two books, viz., (1) AGNI and Other Poems and Translations and (2) Essays and Other Prose Fragments.

We cite these great men only in proof of our theory, nay, conviction, that Kannan-Paattu are authentically mystic. As R. A. Nicholson says one should be a mystic oneself to understand a mystic.

The sixteen pairs of comparisons with which this poem is studded, well-nigh exhaust Adwaitam according to Shankara as well as Meikanda, Visishtadwaitam according to Ramanuja and Dwaitam according to Madhva.

The accelerando of this song culminates in the zenithal pitch when the poetic thought bursts into words thus.

“All the joys of Heaven and Earth
In thee Kannamma, take their birth.”

Notes

Lines 1 - 2 : Flowing light ... thee :

Light flows from Surya. And Narayanan is called Surya Narayanan.

One of the examples used by Saiva-Siddhanta to explain the concept of Advaita dwells on the relationship between “the light of eyes and the sun-light”. *Vide Sivaprakasaam, St. 7.*

Lines 5 - 6 : Extolling words ... my lass :

Bharti's translation is as follows :-

“With falt'ring tongue and words that pant
Thy glories, here, I strive, to chant.”

Cf. (i) “Words gush errant and get broken alas”
The Song of the Kuyil, line 316

(ii) “ ... words strain,
Crack and sometimes break under the burden,
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
Will not stay still ... ” *T. S. Eliot*

Line 8 : Julep honied :

The words in the original are “Soorai Amuthu”. According to Bharati it is ‘nectar spray’. The word ‘Soorai’ is associated with pillage. It strikes, as here, sometimes wonderment. This sense defies translation. We are left with the solace that even Bharati cannot translate Bharati. Prof. A. S. R. renders these words as ‘A nectarine riot’.

Cf. “And first behold this celestial julep here,
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,
With spirits of balm and fragrant syrups mixed,
Milton, Comus, Lines 672-674.

Line 9-10 : " Thou art ... finger touching :

Bharati's translation is as follows :

" Thou to me the Harp of gold,
And I to thee the finger bold "

Cf. (i) " touch to tune the harmony "
Shakespeare, King Richard II, 1, 3, 165.

(ii) " He touched the Veena into Music "
Thirugnaanasambhandar.

Line 16 : Life adorable :

" Vaazhvu Nilai " is "well of life" according to Bharati;
"The anchor of my life" according to Prof. A. S. R. and
" Life adorable " according to us. By ' Life adorable ' we
mean the adorable principle behind Life.

Line 19-20 Syrup ... thee :

Cf. " Lucent syrops tinct with cinnoman " Keats.

Bharati says " Paanam " is juice of grape. His translation is as follows :-

" Thou to me the juice of grape
And I to thee the cup agape "

Wine is an important symbol for Bharati, the Sakta.

According to Robert Graves and Omar Ali-Shah, Omar Khayyam treats wine in sufic fashion as a metaphor of the ecstasy excited by divine love.

" Saki " (Bartender) means God in sufism. The " Tavern " is the soul's altar.

Jesus is reported as saying : " I will drink no more of this fruit of the vine until I drink it new in the Kingdom of Heaven ."

The communion cup in the church doctrine is a symbol of divine love between God and Man.

Cf. Khurshid Kamandi sobh bar bam afgand

Kai Khusroiroz badah dar jan afgand

Mai Khur ki Manadi sahri gi khizan

Awaza i ishrabu dar ayam afgand.

(Romanized Persian text of the first Rubaiyyat)

" While Dawn, Day's herald straddling the whole sky,
Offers the drowsy world a toast to Wine
The Sun spills early gold on city roofs
Day's regal Host, replenishing his jug."

Tr. Robert Graves.

Lines 21-22 Thy face ... bright :

Cf. " All paths to knowledge are but veins of you "

Devi Mahatmyam Tr. Dr. K. R. S. Iyengar.

Lines 27-28 : Thou to me ... basic

One of the examples used by Saiva Siddhanta to explain the concept of Adwaita dwells on the relationship between 'tune and sound'

Vide Sivagnaana Botham II, I, (c)

Lines 29-30 I can think ... womanly :

Bharati's translation is as follows :

" Unceasing yearns my mind to scan
Thy endless charm, but never can "

She is according to Devi Mahatmyam, " The Mother of transcendences, beyonding all and Supreme. "

Tr. Dr. K. R. S. Iyengar.

Cf. (i) " How shall we praise your puissance and power,
such charm and fearful beauty ? " *Ibid.*

(ii) " Perfect in limb, a pearl among women,
She lights up the four quarters " *Ibid.*

(iii) " Irresistible, unconquerable " *Ibid.*

(iv) " Such being your omnipresence and power
Who's equal to praising you ? " *Ibid.*

- (v) "How describe inapprehensible you ?" Ibid.
 (vi) "All paths to knowledge are but veins of you;
 all women are wholly you." Ibid.

Lines 35-36 Thou wrought :

This is again an example used by Saiva Siddhanta to explain the concept of Adwaita. This example is of course rejected by it.

"Nor is it the same as well as diff'rent,
 As word and its meaning are" are the words of St. Umapathy.

Lines 37-38 Endearing ray beauty real :

Cf. "A woman surpassingly beautiful" Devi Mahatmyam.
Tr. Dr. K. R. S. Iyengar.

Lines 43-44 Thou art..... knowledge sure :

Bharati's love for the Vedas knows no bounds. There are in his writings, prose as well as verse, hundreds of references to the Vedas. His sole aim was to lead a life in absolute consonance with the Vedic principles. Only once did he say that his mind was not enlivened by the Vedas. This he said to emphasise the cruelty wrought by indigence. "Indigence can cause reason to faint and the very Vedas then become a vexation" (உயர்வேதமும் வெறுப்புறச் சோர்மதியும் வாதனை பொறுக்கவில்லை) are his words.

Lines 51-52 Abundant..... I to thee :

Bharati's English version appears to omit this line.

"Selvam" is wealth. "Semanithi" is reserve fund. But we have rendered this term as 'Saving Knowledge'. That which puts wealth to proper use is knowledge. Minus this, the possessor of wealth is lost. To save wealth and its possessor what is required is knowledge.

Line 54 : Golden.....found :

This is the ray which lights all the stars and the suns of the Universe.

Line 57-58 The stars..... I to thee :

The Moon holds its pride of place among the stars of the firmament.

Cf. " And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne

Clustered around by all her starry Fays" *Keats*

Lines 59-60 Valour..... to thee :

Cf. Fortuna favet fortibus.

(Fortune favours the brave)

The valourous are ever-victorious.

Even if they die the Valhalla is there to receive them.

Lines 62-63 : All the joys.....birth :

Kannan is indeed SAT-CIT-ANANDA

(15)

கண்ணன் — என் ஆண்டான்

(அடிமை புகல்)

1. தஞ்ச முலகினில் எங்கனு மின்றித்
தவித்துத் தடுமாறி.
பஞ்சைப் பறைய னடிமை புகுந்தேன்
பார முனக்காண்டே ;
ஆண்டே — பாரமுனக் காண்டே.
2. துன்பமு நோயு மிடிமையுந் தீர்த்துச்
சுகமரு ளல் வேண்டும் ;
அன்புட னின்புகழ் பாடிக் குதித்துநின்
ஆணை வழிநடப்பேன் ;
ஆண்டே — ஆணைவழி நடப்பேன்
3. சேரி முழுதும் பறையடித் தேயருட்
சீர்த்திகள் பாடிடுவேன் ;
பேரிகை கொட்டித் திசைக ளதிரநின்
பெயர் முழக்கிடுவேன் ;
ஆண்டே — பெயர் முழக்கிடுவேன்.
4. பண்ணைப் பறையர்தங் கூட்டத்தி லேயிவன்
பாக்கிய மோங்கிவிட்டான்
கண்ண னடிமை யிவனெனுங் கீர்த்தியில்
காதலுற் றிங்குவந்தேன் ;
ஆண்டே — காதலுற் றிங்குவந்தேன்.
5. காடு கழலிகள் காத்திடுவேன், நின்றன்
காலிகள் மேய்த்திடுவேன் ;
பாடுபடச் சொல்லிப் பார்த்ததன் பின்னரென்
பக்குவஞ் சொல்லாண்டே ;
ஆண்டே — பக்குவஞ் சொல்லாண்டே.
6. தோட்டங்கள் கொத்திச் செடிவளர்க்கச் சொல்லிச்
சோதனை போடாண்டே ;
காட்டு மழைக்குறி தப்பிச் சொன்ன லெனைக்
கட்டியடி யாண்டே ;
ஆண்டே — கட்டியடி யாண்டே.
7. பெண்டு குழந்தைகள் கஞ்சி குடித்துப்
பிழைத்திட வேண்டுமையே !
அண்டை யயலுக் கென் னாலுப காரங்கள்
ஆகிட வேண்டுமையே !
உபகாரங்கள் — ஆகிட வேண்டுமையே !

(15)

KANNAN — My Manor - Lord

(Surrendering)

Refuge none to me this world offereth
 'Wildered and distressed, this pariah poor
 Seek in thee refuge, succour me oh Lord!
 I pray unto thee, succour me oh Lord!

5. Cure me of sorrows dire, maladies sore
 And chill penury, and bestow comfort;
 In love will I dance and sing your glory
 And obey thee oh Lord! obey I will.

- 10 In all the slums I'll tabor beat, and sing
 Thy praise and grace; I'll beat the drum:—
 heigh-ho-hum!
 And directions eight will echo thy name;
 Thus 'll I beat aloud to resonnd thy name.

- 15 'Mongst all pariahs manorial
 This one 's sure atop; 'a slave of Kannan'—
 A fame to reckon with: so in love I came;
 In love alone oh my dear Lord, I came.

- 20 Thy farms and fields I will guard and eke graze
 All thy cattle; put me to work severe
 And test me thus to find out my fitness;
 O Lord of Manor, find out my fitness.

- 25 Bid me tend the grove and rear the plants;
 Try me and prove me; rain will I forecast;
 And should I mispredict, with whip scourge me;
 Keep me tied, oh lord, and with whip scourge me.
 My wife and kids must, aye, live; on conjee
 They thrive; I should be of some help, oh Lord,
 To the far and the near; render I should
 Possible help to the far and the near.

noble, upright, honest and well versed is a Brahmin. My friend Sri Vanmikanathan Pillai is a Brahmin. I am a pariah.

Brahmins are they who constitute the 'Brain-Trust'. At any rate, a Brahmin is not one by birth alone. As Emerson says: "It is the surest sign of national decay, when the Brahmins can no longer read or understand the Brahminical philosophy."

Bhagawan Vasudeva says :

"Remember : all you win you must
unstintingly dispense

For the good of all on earth. A Brahmin
must live like a pure

Lighthouse in Life's desolate waters,
like a peak endure

The clouds and blizzards, rains and thunders
that upon him fall :

His strength and wisdom, vision and gifts
he holds in trust for all."

Dilip Kumar Roy, The Immortals of the Bhagavat, Page 21.

Gopala Krishna Bharati, a true Brahmin re-defined Brahminism and Pariahdom. In his justly celebrated musical work 'Nanthan Charitthiram' (The History of Nanda) he deliberately introduced a Brahmin who had to eventually fall at the feet of his serf, a pariah by birth, to come by a true knowledge of the Spirit. B. R. Rajam Iyer follows Gopala Krishna Bharati's version and still further highlights this concept in his "Nanda - The Pariah-Saint".

It is said a chandala shocked the Bhagavat-Pada into spiritual equipoise. Sri Sankara's 'Manishaa Panchakam' is a sure antidote for spiritual misunderstanding.

The pariah of the ancient days was a slave, at least a serf who had to entirely subsist on the precarious generosity of his manor-lord. He was faithful, loyal, and devoted to his lord. He was happy in the happiness of his Lord, aye, too happy.

He had no other ambition in his life (I still vividly remember the face of our family-serf, Turaiyan who passed away when I was twelve years old. He was all love and affection for us. When we children wanted to touch him, he would run away to ever maintain the prescribed distance between a high-born and a low-born. He lived for us.)

Such self-effacing loyalty in the teeth of excruciating squalor and chilling indigence surpasseth understanding To him the manor-lord was Lord-God Himself. Small wonder that such unexampled devotion and loyalty deeply touched the supersensitive soul of Bharati. He willingly became a pariah to partake of the unalloyed bliss of divine pariahdom.

The credit goes to Gopala Krishna Bharati, who discovered that this divine pariahdom is the royal highroad leading to Brahminhood. Bharati, the sharpest genius of the Tamil race is happy to sound a clarion call for a re-dedication to this truth.

“There is no Brahmin in all the world to match Nanda’s Brahminhood”. *Bharati.*

Notes

Lines 1-4: Refuge none ... oh Lord !:

Cf. (i) “The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him ”

Psalms, ciii, 17.

(ii) “Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies. ”

Ibid. , ciii, 4.

(iii) “Our sole refuge Thou ; Thy grace our refuge
Fatigu’d I come seeking Thee”

Vinaayakar Naan Mani Maalai.

Lines 3-4: Cure me comfort :

Cf. (i) "great wealth

Coupled with a life of hundred summers

Thou shouldst, my Lord ! deign to bestow on me."

Ibid.

(ii) "Who averts the onslaught of troubles"

Ibid.

Lines 7-12: In love I will :

Cf. "..... both heaven and earth shall high extol

Thy praises, with the innumerable sound

Of Hymns and sacred songs"

Milton, Paradise Lost, III, lines 146-148.

Lines 13-16: 'Mongst pariahs I came :

This pariah devotee is Vergil's 'Pietatis imago'
(The Image of Devotion).

Lines 17-18: Thy farms..... severe :

Cf. (i) "I must work the works of him who sent while it
is day."

N. T. John ix, 4.

(ii) "The best worship however. is stout working."

Carlyle, Letter to his wife.

(iii) "Establish thou the work of our hands upon us
yea, the work of our hands establish thou it"

Psalms, xc, 17.

(iv) "..... Free men freely work :

Whoever fears God, fears to sit at ease."

E. B. Browning, Aurora Leigh, viii, 784-785.

(v) "Genuine work alone, what thou workest faithfully,
fully, that is eternal, as the Almighty Founder
and World-BUILDER himself "

Carlyle, Past and Present, II, Chap. 11.

- (vi) "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man may say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" *James. 2, 14.*

Lines 19-20 : And test me ... fitness :

- Cf. (i) "Everyman's work shall be made manifest "
N. T., I. Corinthians, 111, 13.

- (ii) "By the work one knows the workman."
La Fontaine, Fables, 21.

Bharati the pariah-slave, likes to hear from his Lord Ovidian words of appreciation : *Materiem superbat opus* (The work excelled the material.)

Lines 21-24 : Bid me ... scourge me :

"Experience is by industry achieved
And perfected by the swift course of time "

says Shakespeare. Bharati the pariah-slave, is full of this experience. He is sure of his job ; he can do suo marte (by his own prowess). Hence this challenge.

"Self-trust " says Emerson " is the essence of heroism, "

- Cf. "Nor fate, nor chance, nor any star commands
Success and failure—naught but your own hands. "
S. V. Cole, Works and Days.

Lines 25-26 : My wife ... thrive :

The Grahasta (house-holder) must toil to maintain his family. He who fails in this duty is 'immoral' according to Swami Vivekananda.

Lines 26-28 : I should ... the near :

Cf. " ... O Ganapathy !

To serve all lives worshipfully, I will

My duty deem and live in delight great. "

Vinaayakar Naan Mani Maalai.

See also the notes for the above lines appearing in
' Bharati-Pancharatna ' Series No. 1.

Lines 29-32 : To clothe ... provide :

Cf. (i) "(I) was naked and you clothed Me "

Matthew, 25, 36.

(ii) "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute
of daily food,

And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace,

be ye warmed and filled ; notwithstanding

Ye give them not those things which are
needful to the body ; what doth it profit ? "

James, 15 and 16.

Lines 33—34 Round...devils :

Cf. (i) "...the good gunas in us

Alone are deathless beatitudes"

Vinaayakar Naan Mani Maalai.

The organs of sense, when they behave, are called Devas ;
when they mis-behave they are called Asuras.

(ii) "I came to realise slowly but inescapably that the
Asura of whom I had heard so much was not a mythical figure
with a multitude of heads and hands but a real resident and
cherished guest housed only too willingly by each one of us."

Dilip Kumar Roy, Sri Aurobindo Came to Me, Page 59.

(iii) "Within my nine-gated dwelling foul bewildered,
By the five senses sore deceived ... "

Tiruvaachakam, Tr. G. U. Pope.

Lines 35- 40 : By pow'rful . Troubles :

The concluding portion of this poem partially resembles the end-portion of St. Kumara Gurupara's Kandar Kali Venba.

Cf. "If robbers vile on us close in

And bid us stop our cart at once,

We will invoke our black Maari

Then Death itself will tremble sure."

Bharati, Bandy-Man's song, Tr. T. N. R

Message : To be counted among Hari's Jan is a divine privilege.

(16)

கண்ணம்மா — என் குலதெய்வம்

(அர்ப்பணம்)

நின்னைச் சரணடைந்தேன் — கண்ணம்மா !

நின்னைச் சரணடைந்தேன் !

1. பொன்னை உயர்வைப் புகழை விரும்பிடும்
என்னைக் கவலைகள் தின்னத்தகாதென்று
நின்னை
2. மிடிமையு மச்சமு மேவியென் னெஞ்சிற்
குடிமை புகுந்தன, கொன்றவை போக்கென்று
நின்னை
3. தன்செய லெண்ணித் தவிப்பது தீர்ந்திங்கு
நின்செயல் செய்து நிறைவுபெறும் வணம்
நின்னை
4. துன்ப மினியில்லை, சோர்வில்லை, தோற்பில்லை
அன்பு நெறியில் அறங்கள் வளர்ந்திட
நின்னை
5. நல்லது தீயது நாமறியோ மன்னை !
நல்லது நாட்டுக ! தீமையை யோட்டுக
நின்னை

Introductory Remarks

“Surrender in warfare and politics” says S. S. Cohen, “is naturally an ignominious defeat, but in the spiritual warfare it is a victory of which none is capable but a hero of the highest order.”

“Spiritual surrender, we are told, is not a mental, still less an oral act, but the result of Grace which comes in its own time and of its own accord to cause the automatic subsidence of that self-asserting element in the sadhaka's nature which stands in his own way to ultimate realisation. Sometimes it is sudden and sometimes it is so gradual that the devotee himself may not become aware of it. The Grace, although it comes from the Guru by his very ripening presence,

KANNAMMA—MY FAMILY-DEITY ✓**(Dedication)**

“Hear then, O Partha, how, practising yoga, with the mind clinging to Me, with Me as thy refuge, thou shalt know Me in full, without any doubt.”

The Bhagavad Gita, VII, 1. Tr. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan.

I seek refuge in Thee, oh Kannamma !

Refuge I do seek in Thee, Kannamma !

Grandeur, gold and glory I go after
And am gobbled clean by worries galore ;

5. Pray, me protect, I seek refuge in Thee,

My heart is alas in fee simple held
By dire indigence and foul dread ; kill them
And me protect, I seek refuge in Thee.

‘ Me, Mine and I ’ — from this perdition vile

10. Save me to serve Thee and Thy will only ;
Pray, me protect, I seek refuge in Thee.

No more should thrive fear, fatigue or failure
But only righteousness on the path o’ love ;
Pray, me protect. I seek refuge in Thee.

15. Knowledge of good and bad, we possess not
‘ Stablish good and do chase evil away ;
Pray me protect, I seek refuge in Thee.

is not fortuitous, but fully earned by hard internal fight, by long long periods of suffering, of prayers, of self-purification and of intense yearning for release.” *Guru Ramana, pages 12-13.*

The chela should empty himself of everything in the presence of the Guru. The Guru manifests not till the least hold on the tiniest part of possessions is given up. Paanchaali had to give up her hold on the saree to compel the advent of Kannan. Guru is ‘ Grace Embodied ’, according to Saiva Siddhanta.

En Chinthai thirai kodutthane (I gave my very chinta as tribute) says Bharati elsewhere.

Sankara divested Mandana Misra of his all before he made him a Suresvara.

"It seems to me that I am being born into a new life and that all the methods and habits of the past can no longer be of any use. It seems to me that what was once a result is now only a preparation .. It is as if I was stripped of my past, of my errors as well as my conquests, as if all that had disappeared to give place to one new-born whose whole existence has yet to take shape.

"An immense gratitude rises from my heart, I seem to have arrived at the threshold which I have so long sought." Prayers and Meditations of The Mother, pages 90-91, Quoted by Dr. K. R. S. Iyengar.

"The soul is now in the third stage which is called Suddha (pure) As the soul is still in its embodiment, the person is called a Jivan-Mukta (one who is liberated while yet alive). The Jivan-Mukta has his being in the Pathy. He is just a puppet and the puppeteer is the Pathy. Through His puppet the Lord plays a divine game. Whatever the Jivan-Mukta does, cannot bind him. His acts are like fried seeds. They cannot germinate. He is endowed with endless felicity. He companies with the devotees... He travels on life's common way in cheerful godliness."

T. N. R., Siddhantha Chathushtayam, pages XII-XIII.

Notes

Lines 1-5: I seek in Thee:

The devotee is besieged by worries. Why? He seeks grandeur; gold and glory. These for ever generate worries.

Cf. "...glory's glitter, passion's pomp, wealth's pageants
With their deep legacy of sighs and tears."

— Dilip Kumar Roy, *Ambarish*.

Bharati demands gold, glory etc., and yet he seeks through this prayer, exemption from worries. This is not at all a strange prayer. St. Sundarar and St. Arunagiri have offered similar prayers to the Lord.

Line 7: dire indigence and foul dread;

Cf. (i) "Wanest thou to know what is more galling
than indigence? then know that indigence alone is more
galling than indigence" *Kural 1041. Tr. V. V. S. Iyer.*

(ii) "Cruel indeed is indigence; than that
More cruel is juvenile indigence." *Avvai*

'Foul dread' is the dreaded Demogorgon. See pages
26-27, 'Bharati-Pancharatna Series No. 1.

Lines 9-10: 'Me, Mine and I' Thee:

Crucify the ego. No resurrection, no ascension is possible without crucifixion.

Cf. "The feelings of I and Mine are nought but vanity and pride: he who crusheth them entereth a higher world than the world of the gods" *Kural, 346. Tr. V. V. S. Iyer.*

Line 10: Thy will only:

Cf. (i) "Thy will be done."

(ii) "My duty is to serve (Thee)". St. Appar.

Lines 12-13: No more..... love:

Cf. (i) "Fatigu'd I came seeking Thee." *Bharati.*

(ii) "We can endure this no more.

So let us take refuge in the feet of Mother
Lakshmi" *Bharati, Page 8, Agni and Other Poems.*

Fatigue, fear and failure cease to be in the reign of Love.
And Love, we will repeat ad infinitum, is the Religion of
Bharati. "Love refines

The thoughts, and heart enlarges; hath his seat
In reason, and is judicious; is the scale
By which to heavenly love thou may'st ascend."

Paradise Lost, VIII, 589-592.

Line 15: Knowledge.....posses not:

Cf. "Be lowly wise

Think only what concerns thee and thy being."

Ibid, Lines 173-174.

Line 16: 'Stablish.....away:

The in-built evil is called Aanava-Mala by Saiva
Siddhanta. The effect of this impurity is nullified by the
Siva-Guru.

Message: Krishnatparam kimapi tattvam aham no jane
(I know not what Truth there can be beyond the
Truth that is Krishna)

Madhududan Saraswati. Quoted by Dilip Kumar Roy.

(17)

ஆர்ய தர்சனம் : ஓர் கனவு.

கனவென்ன கனவே — என்றன்
கண்துயி லாது நனவினிலே யுற்ற

(கன)

1. கானகங் கண்டேன் — அடா
கானகங் கண்டேன் — உச்சி
வானகத்தே வட்ட மதியொளி கண்டேன்.
2. பொற்றிருக் குன்றம் — அங்கொர்
பொற்றிருக் குன்றம் — அதைச்
சுற்றியிருக்கும் சுனைகளும் பொய்கையும்.

(கன)

(கன)

புத்த தர்சனம்

3. குன்றத்தின் மீதே — அந்தக்
குன்றத்தின் மீதே — தனி
நின்றதொ ரால நெடுமரங் கண்டேன்.
4. பொன்மரத் தின்கீழ் — அந்தப்
பொன்மரத் தின்கீழ் — வெறுஞ்
சின்மய மானதோர் தேவ னிருந்தனன்.
5. புத்த பகவன் — எங்கள்
புத்த பகவன் — அவன்
சுத்த மெய்ஞ் ஞானச் சுடர்முகங் கண்டேன்.
6. காந்தியைப் பார்த்தேன் — அவன்
காந்தியைப் பார்த்தேன் — உப
சாந்தியில் முழுகித் ததும்பிக் குளித்தனன்
7. ஈதுநல் விந்தை ! — என்னை ?
ஈதுநல் விந்தை ! — புத்தன்
சோதி மறைந்திருள் துன்னிடக் கண்டேன்.
8. பாய்ந்ததங் கொளியே ! — பின்னும்
பாய்ந்ததங் கொளியே ! — அருள்
தோய்ந்த தென்மேனி சிலிர்த்திடக் கண்டேன்.

(கன)

(கன)

(கன)

(கன)

(கன)

(கன)

க்ருஷ்ணர்ஜுன தர்சனம்

9. குன்றத்தின் மீதே — அந்தக்
குன்றத்தின் மீதே — தனி
நின்ற பொற் றேரும் பரிகளும் கண்டேன்.
10. தேரின்முன் பாகன் — மணித்
தேரின்முன் பாகன் — அவன்
சீரினைக் கண்டு திகைத்துநின் — றேனிந்தக்

(கன)

(கன)

(17)

Aarya—Dharsan

(A Dream and a Vision.)

O what a dream ! Not a dream of slumber
With my eyes closed, but in broad wakefulness.

A wood I beheld, a wood thick with trees !
In mid-sky circular Cynthia shone !

O what a dream ...

A hill of gold divine — gold and divine !
With many spas and tarns quaquaversal !

O what a dream ...

Buddha — Dharsan

Atop that hill, atop that very hill
I saw a solitary banyan-tree !

O what a dream ...

Under the golden tree, that golden tree !
Was seated a God of pure Consciousness !

O what a dream ! ...

Buddha-Deva, it was Buddha-Deva !
True lustre of pure wisdom was his face !

O what a dream ...

The glow I beheld, his glow I beheld !
He was with a mystic peace surcharged !

O what a dream ...

5. What wonder is this ! O what a wonder !
The light o' Buddha vanisht and murk prevailed !

O what a dream ...

But light gushed again, gushed again amain !
Grace poured ; my body was with thrill pierced !

O what a dream ...

Krishna — Dharsan

20. Upon that hill, upon that very hill
Stood apart a golden car with horses !

O what a dream ...

At its foremost was the Charioteer !
Stunned was I, aye, by his gracious bearing !

O what a dream ...

11. ஒமென்ற மொழியும் — அவன்
ஒமென்ற மொழியும் — நீலக்
காமன்ற னுருவுமல் வீமன்றன் திறலும் (கன)
12. அருள்பொங்கு விழியும் — தெய்வ
அருள்பொங்கு விழியும் — காணில்
இருள்பொங்கு நெஞ்சினர் வெருள் பொங்குத் திகிரியும் (கன)
13. கண்ணனைக் கண்டேன் — எங்கள்
கண்ணனைக் கண்டேன் — மணி
வண்ணனை ஞான மலையினைக் கண்டேன். (கன)
14. சேனைகள் தோன்றும் — வெள்ளச்
சேனைகள் தோன்றும் — பரி
யானையுந் தேரும் அளவில் தோன்றும் (கன)
15. கண்ணனற் றேரில் — நீலக்
கண்ணனற் றேரில் — மிக
எண்ணயர்ந்தானோ ரினைஞனைக் கண்டேன். (கன)
16. விசையன்கொ லிவனே ! — விறல்
விசையன்கொ லிவனே ! — நனி
இசையுநன் கிசையுமிங் கிவனுக்கிந் நாமம். (கன)
17. வீரிய வடிவம் ! — என்ன
வீரிய வடிவம் ! — இந்த
ஆரிய னெஞ்ச மயர்ந்ததென் விந்தை ! (கன)
18. பெற்றதென் பேறே — செவி
பெற்றதென் பேறே — அந்தக்
கொற்றவன் சொற்கள் செவியுறக் கொண்டேன் (கன)
19. “வெற்றியை வேண்டேன் — ஐய
வெற்றியை வேண்டேன் — உயிர்
அற்றிடு மேனுமவர் தமைத்தீண்டேன் (பெற்ற)
20. சுற்றங்கொல்வேனோ ? — என்றன்
சுற்றங்கொல்வேனோ ? — கிளை
அற்றபின் செய்யு மரசுமொ ரரசோ ?” (பெற்ற)
21. மிஞ்சிய அருளால் — மித
மிஞ்சிய அருளால் — அந்த
வெஞ்சிலை வீரன் பலசொல் விரித்தான். (கன)
22. இம்மொழி கேட்டான் — கண்ணன்
இம்மொழி கேட்டான் — ஐயன்
செம்மலர் வதனத்திற் சிறுநகை பூத்தான் (கன)

Om was chaunted, Om the Logos ! He was
In form a Manmath, in prowess Bhima !

O what a dream.....

25. His eyes with grace divine o'erflowed, his disc
Would strike terror in benighted bosoms !

O what a dream.....

I saw Kannan, aye, I saw Kannan !
I saw the Gem, the Mountain of Wisdom!

O what a dream

30. Armies appeared : they the number debý ;
Countless were the horses, mammoths, and cars.

O what a dream.....

In the great car of Kannan, the blue-hued,
I saw a youth, steeped in melancholy

O what a dream.....

Is he Vijayan, the heroic Victor !
Fittingly named, aye, very fittingly !

O what a dream...

35. Valiancy incarnate was his form !
But what wonder's this, droops his Aarya—heart!

O what a dream.....

40. " I am not after victory, O Lord !
Welcome Death ! I'll not my bow bend 'gainst them.

O what a dream.....

Will I slay my kith and kin, my kinsfolk !
What reign will that be, with all kinsmen slain !

O what a dream.....

Love limitless, aye, love limitless streamed
From the many words of the bold bow-man !

O what a dream

45. Kannan heard him, even Kannan heard him;
A smile lit up the lotus face of the Lord.

O what a dream.....

11. ஒமென்ற மொழியும் — அவன்
ஒமென்ற மொழியும் — நீலக்
காமன்ற னுருவுமவ் வீமன்றன் திறலும் (கன)
12. அருள்பொங்கு விழியும் — தெய்வ
அருள்பொங்கு விழியும் — காணில்
இருள்பொங்கு நெஞ்சினர் வெருள் பொங்குத் திகிரியும் (கன)
13. கண்ணனைக் கண்டேன் — எங்கள்
கண்ணனைக் கண்டேன் — மணி
வண்ணனை ஞான மலையினைக் கண்டேன். (கன)
14. சேனைகள் தோன்றும் — வெள்ளச்
சேனைகள் தோன்றும் — பரி
யானையுந் தேரும் அளவில தோன்றும் (கன)
15. கண்ணனற் றேரில் — நீலக்
கண்ணனற் றேரில் — மிக
எண்ணயர்ந்தானோ ரினைஞனைக் கண்டேன். (கன)
16. விசையன்கொ லிவனே ! — விறல்
விசையன்கொ லிவனே ! — நனி
இசையுநன் கிசையுமிங் கிவனுக்கிந் தாமம். (கன)
17. வீரிய வடிவம் ! — என்ன
வீரிய வடிவம் ! — இந்த
ஆரிய னெஞ்ச மயர்ந்ததென் விந்தை ! (கன)
18. பெற்றதென் பேறே — செவி
பெற்றதென் பேறே — அந்தக்
கொற்றவன் சொற்கள் செவியுறக் கொண்டேன் (கன)
19. “வெற்றியை வேண்டேன் — ஐய
வெற்றியை வேண்டேன் — உயிர்
அற்றிடு மேனுமவர் தமைத்தீண்டேன் (பெற்றி)
20. சுற்றங்கொல்வேனோ ? — என்றன்
சுற்றங்கொல்வேனோ ? — கிளை
அற்றபின் செய்ய மரசுமொ ரரசோ ?” (பெற்றி)
21. மிஞ்சிய அருளால் — மித
மிஞ்சிய அருளால் — அந்த
வெஞ்சிலை வீரன் பலசொல் விரித்தான். (கன)
22. இம்மொழி கேட்டான் — கண்ணன்
இம்மொழி கேட்டான் — ஐயன்
செம்மலர் வதனத்திற் சிறுநகை பூத்தான் (கன)

Om was chaunted, Om the Logos ! He was
In form a Manmath, in prowess Bhima !

O what a dream.....

25. His eyes with grace divine o'erflowed, his disc
Would strike terror in benighted bosoms !

O what a dream.....

I saw Kannan, aye, I saw Kannan !
I saw the Gem, the Mountain of Wisdom!

O what a dream

- Armies appeared : they the number debý ;
30. Countless were the horses, mammoths, and cars.

O what a dream.....

In the great car of Kannan, the blue-hued,
I saw a youth, steeped in melancholy

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Is he Vijayan, the heroic Victor !
Fittingly named, aye, very fittingly !

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35. Valiancy incarnate was his form !
But what wonder's this, droops his Aarya—heart!

O what a dream.....

"I am not after victory, O Lord !

40. Welcome Death ! I'll not my bow bend 'gainst them.

O what a dream.....

Will I slay my kith and kin, my kinsfolk !
What reign will that be, with all kinsmen slain !

O what a dream.....

Love limitless, aye, love limitless streamed
From the many words of the bold bow-man !

O what a dream

45. Kannan heard him, even Kannan heard him;
A smile lit up the lotus face of the Lord.

O what a dream.....

23. வில்லினை யெட்டா — கையில்
வில்லினை யெட்டா — அந்தப்
புல்லியர் கூட்டத்தைப் பூழ்திசெய் திட்டா (வில்லினை)
24. வாடி நில்லாதே — மனம்
வாடி நில்லாதே — வெறும்
பேடியர் ஞானப் பிதற்றல்சொல் லாதே (வில்லினை)
25. ஒன்றுள துண்மை — என்றும்
ஒன்றுள துண்மை — அதைக்
கொன்றி டொணாது குறைத்தலொண் னாது (வில்லினை)
26. துன்பமு மில்லை — கொடுந்
துன்பமு மில்லை — அதில்
இன்பமு மில்லை பிறப்பிறப் பில்லை. (வில்லினை)
27. படைகளுந் தீண்டா — அதைப்
படைகளுந் தீண்டா — அனல்
கடவு மொண்ணாது புனல்நனை யாது (வில்லினை)
28. செய்தலுன் கடனே — அறஞ்
செய்தலுன் கடனே — அதில்
எய்துறும் வினைவினி லெண்ணம்வைக் காதே (வில்லினை)

Introductory Remarks.

This poem is a mystic piece. Some strain as well as effort is needed both for explication and for comprehension. Bharati pre-supposes the intelligence of his reader and addresses his thoughts from a certain eminence. He is well-versed in Sastras and expects his reader to have a fair acquaintance with them.

A glow is beheld by the poet. This glow is ineluctably linked with a mystic peace. The symbol of light and peace is the Buddha. But this light recedes and darkness envelopes.

Bharati is a lover and admirer of the Buddha. Vide Vinaayakar Naan Mani Maalai. However his love and admiration for the Buddha does not stand in his way of criticising Buddhism when criticism is warranted. Bharati's proem to his translation of Srimad Bhagavad Gita is a tiny thesis on the merits and demerits of Buddhism. His discussion is impartial.

"Pick up the bow, sirrah! Pick up the bow!
Smite the wicked throng into dusticles!

Pick up the bow ...

Wilt not and suffer not your mind to wilt;
50. Blabber not pseudo-wisdom like eunuchs.

Pick up the bow ...

Truth is one only and sempiternal
Deathless it is and ne'er diminishes.

Pick up the bow ...

Sorrow there is none, nought of sorrow dire!
In That there's neither joy nor birth and death!

Pick up the bow ...

55. It is proof against weapons—all weapons!
Fire cannot burn It, nor water wet It!

Pick up the bow ...

Your duty is to do that which is right
And divest your thoughts from the fruits thereof!

Pick up the bow ...

Herman Hesse's much misunderstood novel, *Siddhartha*, is a book of the century. *Siddhartha*—the Samana-turned-Brahmin-boy confronts the Buddha thus:

"Surely every Brahmin's heart must beat more quickly, when through your teachings he looks at the world, completely coherent, without a loophole, clear as crystal, not dependent on chance, not dependent on the gods. Whether it is good or evil, whether life itself is pain or pleasure, whether it is uncertain—that it may perhaps be this is not important—but the unity of the world, the coherence of all events, the embracing of the big and the small from the same stream, from the same law of cause, of becoming and dying: this shines clearly from your exalted teachings, O Perfect One. But according to your teachings, this unity and logical consequence of all things, is broken in one place. Through a small up there streams into the world of unity something strange, something new, something that was not there before and

Line 41: my kith and kin :

The 'Svajana' of the Gita. It is not so much slaughter but slaughter of one's own people that causes distress and anxiety to Arjuna."

Dr. Radhakrishnan

Line 42: What reign ... slain :

"Arjuna passes through a great spiritual tension. When he detaches himself from his social obligations and asks why he should carry out the duty expected of him by society, he gets behind his socialized self and has full awareness of himself as an individual, alone and isolated. He faces the world as a stranger thrown into a threatening chaos. The new freedom creates a deep feeling of anxiety, aloneness, doubt and insecurity. If he is to function successfully, these feelings must be overcome."

Ibid.

"How does the Gita renew its appeal from generation to generation and why is it always a fresh experience whenever one opens it? It is because the situation it depicts is a very human one, the vacillation of the human spirit, in the face of the ordained duty."

The Gita and the Indian Culture,
H. H. Sri Jaya Chamaraja Wadiyar.

Line 46: A smile ... the Lord :

The sonorous sterility of Arjuna's words elicits a smile from the Lord.

"When Arjuna the great warrior had thus unburdened his heart ...

"Krishna smiled ..."

The Bhagavat Gita, II, 9-10:

Tr. Juan Mascaro.

Line 47: Pick up the bow, sirrah ! :

One thing about Kannan is that he cannot suffer fools gladly. He could not endure any longer the humdrum notions of right and wrong as posited by the stupefied Arjuna. A man of proven valiancy too, may sometimes show the white feather. 'A man of genius and virtue is but a man' says Macaulay.

Lines 47-48: Pick up ... dusticles :

Svadharmā—not svajana—is that which counts.

Lines 49-50 : Wilt not ... eunuchs :

"Yield not to impotence, O Partha ! It does not befit thee. Cast off this mean weakness of heart ! stand up, O Parantapa ! (O scorcher of foes)." *Srimad Bhagavad Gita 11,3.*

Tr. Swami Sivananda.

Lines 51-52 : Truth is ... diminishes :

"Bodies are said to die, but THAT which possesses the body is eternal. It cannot be limited, or destroyed. Therefore you must fight."

The Song of God, p.36. Tr. Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood.

Lines 53-54 : Sorrow ... and death :

"Unborn, immutable, eternal, ageless, The soul is not slain when the body's slain."

The Bhagavad Gita.

Tr. Dilip Kumar Roy.

Lines 55-56 : It is ... wet It :

"Weapons cannot hurt the Spirit and fire can never burn him. Untouched is he by drenching waters, untouched is he by arching winds."

The Bhagavad Gita, II, 23, Tr. Juan Mascaro.

Lines 57-58 : Your duty ... thereof".

"In liberty from the bonds of attachment, do thou there-
re the work to be done : for the man whose work is pure
ains indeed the Supreme."

Ibid, III, 19. Tr. J. M.

In the Adhyaatma Ramayana, Rama tells Lakshmana :
He who has fallen in the stream of this world remains un-
lied even though, he may outwardly perform all kinds of
ions."

na karma lipyate nare.

ssage :

"Truly does the Upanishad say "Sharp as a razor's edge
he path difficult and hard to traverse, say the seers." Fortu-
ely it is not necessary and indeed it is not possible for all
measure the whole journey in a single life, nor can we or
uld we abandon our daily duties like the Buddha and flee
the mountain or the forest. It is enough for us to make a
inning."

Sri Aurobindo, Eight Upanishads. page xvii.

கண்ணன் பிறப்பு

1. கண்ணன் பிறந்தான் — எங்கள்
கண்ணன் பிறந்தான் — இந்தக்
காற்றதை யெட்டுத் திசையிலுங் கூறிடும்
திண்ண முடையான் — மணி
வண்ண முடையான் — உயர்
தேவர் தலைவன் புவிமிசைத் தோன்றினன்.
2. பண்ணை யிசைப்பீர் — நெஞ்சிற்
புண்ணை யொழிப்பீர் — இந்தப்
பாரினி லேதுயர் நீங்கிடு மென்றிதை
எண்ணிடைக் கொள்வீர் — நன்கு
கண்ணை விழிப்பீர் — இனி
ஏதுங் குறைவில்லை ; வேதந் துணையுண்டு.
3. அக்கினி வந்தான் — அவன்
திக்கை வளைத்தான் — புவி
யாரிருட் பொய்ம்மைக் கலியை மடித்தனன் ;
துக்கங் கெடுத்தான் — சுரர்
ஒக்கலும் வந்தார் — சுடர்ச்
சூரியன், இந்திரன், வாயு, மருத்துக்கள் —
4. மிக்க திரளாய் — சுரர்
இக்கணந் தன்னில் — இங்கு
மேவி நிறைந்தனர் ; பாவி யசுரர்கள்
பொக்கென வீழ்ந்தார் — உயிர்
கக்கி முடிந்தார் ; — கடல்
போல் ஒலிக்குது வேதம் புவிமிசை

(18)

Kannan Is Born

"Say, heavenly muse, shall not thy sacred vein
Afford a present to the Infant God?"

Milton, On the Morning of Christ's Nativity.

Behold, Kannan is born,
Our dear Kannan is born!
The wind doth this proclaim
To all directions eight.

5. The Solvent great is He
The One who is gem-hued;
The Lord o' Celestials
Aye, to the earth is come.

10. Sing hymns and solemn strain,
Be cured of your heart-sores.
Know that this world will be
Rid of its sorrows all.
Open your eyes, aye, wide!
No more shall flaw mar us,
15. Vedas are sure aidant.

20. Came Agni encircling
All the cardinal points
And routed Kali vile,
The false earth-possessing murk;
Misery did he quell.
Came all the lords of sky -
Dazzling Soorya, Indra
Vayu and Maruts too.

25. This moment gathered all
Devas in throngs good many
Who stood wholly fulfilled.
Down fell sinner-demons
Puking out their dear lives.
O'er earth resound Vedas
30. Like roar of ocean great.

“ To grant endless bliss of release to men,
 Like even unto us, as tho' the nev'r-born
 Is now born, He - sans name - manifests Himself
 Bearing the Nomen Sambhanda Naathan
 Deck'd with the garland of honied flowers
 And doth live happily like the earth-born
 Eating, slumb'ring, fearing and enjoying !
 May that Humaneness Divine, us protect. ”

Potrippahrodai, Tr. T. N. R.

Behold, Kannan is born,
 Our dear Kannan is born !

Notes

Lines 1-2 : Behold ... born :

Cf. “ For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given :
 and the government shall be upon his shoulder and his name
 shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God. The
 Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. ”

Isiah, 9, 6.

Lines 3-4 : The wind ... light:

“ The winds with wonder whist
 Smoothly the waters kissed,
 Whispering new joys to the mild Ocean ”
 Milton, On the Morning of Christ's Nativity,

The Hymn, st. v.

Line 5 : The Solvent :

The original reads “ Thinnamudaiyaan ”,
 ‘ he who is resolute ’. All solution is by resolution.

Lines 7-8 : The Lord ... is come :

Cf. “ And let your silver chime
 Move in melodious time ”.

Ibid, st. xiii.

Lines 10-12 : Be cured ... all :

Cf. “ And speckled vanity
 Will sicken soon and die,
 And leprous sin will melt from earthly mould ”
Ibid, st., xiv.

Line 13 : Open ... wide ;

Cf. " Yet first to those ychained in sleep
The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through
the deep. "
Ibid. st. xvi.

Lines 14-15 : No more ... aidant :

Cf. " And hell itself will pass away
And leave her dolorous mansions to the peeping
day. "
Ibid.

Line 16 : Agni :

" Agni is the messenger and mediator between earth and heaven, announcing to the gods the hymns, and conveying to them the oblations of their worshippers, inviting them with the sound of his crackling flames and bringing them down to the place of sacrifice As concentrating in himself the various sacrificial duties of different classes of human priests, Agni is called the Purohita or chosen priest, the *praepositus* or *prases*. He is a *Ritvij*, a priest or minister who sacrifices at the proper seasons and a *Hotar* an invoking priest, a herald who calls the Gods to enjoy the offering All riches are at his disposal, and he is the most bountiful rewarder, both directly and indirectly, of the pious whose oblations he carries to the Gods. "

The Rg Veda hymns him thus :

"I laud Agni, the chosen Priest, God, minister of
sacrifice,

The hotar, lavishest of wealth."

The Hymns of the Rig Veda. *Tr. R. T. H. Griffith.*

Lines 18-19 : And routed...murk :

Cf. " ... for from this happy day
The old dragon under ground,
In straiter limits bound,
Not half so far casts his usurped sway,

Vinay Avasthi Sahib Bhuvan Vani Trust Donations

And, wroth to see his kingdom fail,
Swings the scaly horror of his folded tail."

Milton, The Hymn, st. XVIII.

Line 20: Misery did he quell:

Cf. "Yea, truth and justice then
Will down return to men"

Ibid, st. XV.

Lines 21-23: Came all... Maruts too:

Soorya: The Sun.

"His bright rays bear him up aloft, the God who
knoweth all that lives,

Surya, that all may look on him.

The constellations pass away, like thieves, together
with their beams,

Before the all-beholding Sun"

Rg. Veda, Tr. R. T. H. Griffith.

Indra: The Lord of the celestial gods.

He routed the Vritras, the enemies, the oppressors, the
malevolent and hostile powers. variously called Vritra, Ahi,
Sushna, Namuchi, Pipru, Sambara, Urana etc.

Vayu: God of the wind:

Vayu is the life-breath of all that breathes. "Beautiful
Vayu, come, for thee these Soma drops have been prepared:
Drink of them, hearken to our call."

Rg Veda, Tr. R. T. H. Griffith.

Maruts: The Tempest-Gods, the friends and helpers of Indra:

"When, Maruts, on the steep ye ride the moving cloud,
ye are like birds on whatsoever path it be. Clouds everywhere
shed forth the rain upon your ears. Drop fairness, honey-bued,
for him who sings your praise." *Rg Veda, Tr. R. T. H. Griffith*

Lines 24 - 26 : This moment fulfilled :

See notes on Agni.

Cf. "Bright-harnessed angels sit in order serviceable."

Milton, The Hymn, St. xvii.

Lines 27 - 28 : Down fell..... dear lives :

Cf. "The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight plaint;
In urns, and altars round,

A drear and dying sound

Affrights the flamens at their service quaint,

And the chill marble seems to sweat,

While each peculiar power forgoes his wonted seat."

Milton, The Hymn, St. xxi.

Lines 29-30 : O'er earth..... ocean great :

Cf (i) "Harping in loud and solemn choir"

Ibid, St. xi.

ii "The air, such pleasure loth to lose

With thousand echoes still prolongs each

heavenly close."

Ibid., St. ix.

Lines 31-32 Came Sankara... on earth :

The word Sankara means 'auspicious'.

Rudra-Siva is the most potent.

"... a mightier than thou,

there is not, Rudra."

The Rig Veda, Book II, Hymn xxviii

Cf. "And then at last our bliss

Full and perfect is"

Milton, The Hymn, St. xviii.

Line 34 : Good-Earth :

Cf. "In consecrated earth,

And on the holy hearth"

Ibid, St. xxi.

(19)

கண்ணன் வரவு.

வருவாய், வருவாய், வருவாய் — கண்ணு
வருவாய், வருவாய், வருவாய்.

1. உருவாய் அறிவில் ஒளிர்வாய் — கண்ணு
உயிரின் னமுதாய்ப் பொழிவாய் — கண்ணு
கருவாய் என்னுள் வளர்வாய் — கண்ணு
கமலத் திருவோ டிணைவாய் — கண்ணு (வருவாய்)
2. இணைவாய் எனதா வியிலே — கண்ணு
இதயத் தினிலே யமர்வாய் — கண்ணு
கணைவா யசுரர் தலைகள் — சிதறக்
கடையூழியிலே படையோ டெழுவாய் ! (வருவாய்)
3. எழுவாய் கடல்மீ தினிலே — யெழுமோர்
இரவிக் கிணையா உளமீ தினிலே
தொழுவேன் சிவனும் நினைவே — கண்ணு,
துணையே, அமரர் தொழும்வா னவனே ! (வருவாய்)

Introductory Remarks

A much needed corrective is administered in this poem to the wrangling Saivites and Vaishnavites. The nameless God deigns to wear a name to help the aspiring devotee to cluch at something for purposes of meditation and concentration. But alas, we have allowed the Saviour Name to become a source of eternal wrangling. The ambrosial rains come to the earth pure and unsullied. Our polluted roof contaminates the pure water. Each one calls his jar of dirtied water pure. All cloth-merchants buy their material from the same source. However each shop advertises that its own goods are the best in the market. Kannan and Mukkannan are the same.

It is fallacious to call our Vedic religion polytheism. As Max Muller would have it, it is Kathenotheism or Henotheism.

Notes

Line 3: You shine.. form :

God is CIT (Intelligence, Knowledge, Wisdom). What is CIT is also SAT and ANANDA. In the stone idol, that which is worshipped is not the stone. The stone idol is a symbol of Satcitananda. "Kallinukkul Arivoli Kaenungaal" (If Light of Knowledge is beheld in the stone, are the words of Bharati.

- May you come, may you come, Kanna
 Oh may you come, may you !
 You shine in Wisdom's form, Kanna,
 You rain as Life's nectar, Kanna !
5. May you like foetus grow in me
 And be linked with Lotus-Lakshmi.
 May you with my spirit be oned,
 May you be in my heart enthroned !
 May you rise armed at aeon's end
10. To smash heads o' demons sabre-toothed.
 Like the sun that on sea rises
 May you rise from my very heart !
 I hail you Kanna, my Siva !
 O Help sure by Devas adored.

Line 5: May you...in me:

The en ventre sa mere takes its time to reach its full stature. The process cannot be precipitated. In Vinaayakar Naan Mani Maalai, our poet says:

"Men of devotion work sans commotion;
 With patience great like seed that germinates
 They work slowly and with achievement 're crown'd."

Tr. T. N. R.

Line 6: Lotus-Lakshmi.

Saiva Siddhanta calls it "Chitrambalam". It is the human heart. It is in this lily-cradle, the golden bee likes to be rocked. "Poonkuvalip-pothil Pori Vandu Kan Paduppa" are the words of Mother Aandaal.

Bharati is never tired of repeating this prayer. See lines 7 and 8.

Line 10: May you ... sabre-toothed:

Between dawn and greater dawn, falls the night when hostile forces work united. Human weaponry in this hour is of no avail.

Lines 11-12: Like the sun...heart!:

The darkness of the soul can be quelled only by the sunrise of Gnosis.

Lines 13-14: I hail...adored:

See Vinaayakar Naan Mani Maalai, St. 8.

(20)

கண்ணம்மா — அங்க வர்ணனை

எங்கள் கண்ணம்மா நகைபுது ரோஜாப் பூ ;
எங்கள் கண்ணம்மா விழிஇந்தர நீலப் பூ !
எங்கள் கண்ணம்மா முகஞ்செந் தாமரைப் பூ ;
எங்கள் கண்ணம்மா நுதல்பால ஸூர்யன்.

1. எங்கள் கண்ணம்மா எழில்மின் னலைநேர்க்கும் ;
எங்கள் கண்ணம்மா புருவங்கள் மதன்விற்கள்
திங்களை மூடிய பாம்பினைப் போல
செறிகுழல் ; இவள் நாசி எட் பூ.

(எங்கள்)

2. மங்கள வாக்கு நித்யானந்த லூற்று ;
மதுர வாயமிர்தம் ; இதழ் அமிர்தம் ;
ஸங்கீத மென்குரல் ஸரஸ்வதி வீணை ;
சாய லரம்பை, சதுரயிராணி.

(எங்கள்)

3. இங்கித நாத நிலைய மிரு செவி ;
சங்கு நிகர்த்த கண்டம் அமிர்த சங்கம் ;
மங்களக் கைகள் மஹாசக்தி வாஸம் ;
வயிரு லிலை ; இடை யமிர்த வீடு.

(எங்கள்)

4. சங்கரனைத் தாங்கு நந்திபத சதுரம்
தாமரை யிருதாள் லக்ஷ்மீ பீடம் ;
பொங்கித் ததும்பித் திசை யெங்கும் பாயும்
புத்தன்பும் ஞானமும் மெய்த்திருக் கோலம்.

(எங்கள்)

Kannamma-A Description, a capite ad calcem.

The smile of Kannamma is rose-fresh

Her eyes are verily Indraneela ;

The face of our Kannamma 's red lotus,

Her temple is the rising sun itself.

5. Our Kannamma's beauty is lightning-like,
Her brow is like the bow of Manmata ;
Dense and dark her locks, like the snake that hides
The moon ; her nose 's the bloom of sesame.

Her auspicious words, spa o' bliss eternal ;

10. Her mouth, nectar ; her lips ambrosia.
Her voice o' music, Saraswathy's Veena ;
Mien, Rambha's ; sagacity, Indrani's.

Her ears are the abode of music sweet,

Her conch-like throat, a nectarean chank ;

15. Her hands divine, Temple of Sakthi great ;
Stomach, banyan - leaf ; hips, chapel of nectar.

Her pedestal 's Nandhi who bears Shiva ;

Her lotus-feet are the throne of Lakshmi ;

O'erflowing love that fills directions,
Love e'er-fresh, and Gaosis are her form true.

Introductory Remarks.

Sanskrit as well as Tamil bards delight in descriptions cap-a-pie. Readers may recall to their mind the famous passage of the Comedy of Errors (III, 1, 110-136) where Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse indulge in a duologue which progresses geographically. Less said about this, the better.

The theme on our hand is a divine one and each part of the anatomy is a holy symbol. Here is no kill-joy analysis. The devotee admires the God, every inch a deity. To explain the unknown, the poet has to have recourse to known words. These known words surpass in their import their common meanings.

"Woman is a ray of God: she is not the earthly
beloved

She is creative: You might say she is not created."

Rumi.

This verse is explained by R. A. Nicholson thus :

"Sweeping aside the veil of form, the poet beholds in woman the eternal Beauty, the inspirer and object of all love and regards her, in her essential nature, as the medium through which the Beauty reveals itself and exercises creative activity. Ibnu'l-Arabi went so far as to say that the most perfect vision of God is enjoyed by those who contemplate Him in woman."

Notes.

Line 1 : The smile ... rose-fresh :

Cf. "'Sit not thy smile beauteous

The light and bloom o' Eden?"

Bharati

Line 2: Indraneela :

Indraneela is sapphire.

W. R. Alger says: "A blue eye is a true eye."

Cf. Die blauen Veilchen der Aeugelein.

(Those blue violets, her eyes.) Heine.

Lines 3-4: " ... Her angel's face

As the great eye of heaven, shined bright,

And made a sunshine in the shady place ;

Did never mortal eye behold such heavenly grace.

Spenser, Faerie Queen Bk. 1, canto 3, st 4.

Lines 7-8: like the snake ... Moon :

The comparison of a woman's plaited hair to a black snake is truly Indian. The snake referred to here is Raahu. Raahu is the cause of eclipses. He is the ascending node.

Line 12: Rambha :

An Apsaras or nymph produced at the churning of the Ocean of Milk, and popularly the type of female beauty.

Line 12: Indrani :

Wife of Indra, also called Sachi and Aindri. She is mentioned in the Rg Veda, and is said to be the most fortunate of women, "for her husband shall never die of old age"

Line 17: Nandhi:

The bull of Siva. He is the chamberlain of Siva, chief of his personal attendants (ganas), and carries a staff of office. He accompanies with music the tandava dance of Siva.

Vishnu Himself chooses to serve Siva as Nandhi, it is said. "Maal-Vidai" (Vishnu-Bull) is a term frequently mentioned in Saivite hymns.

Lines 19-20: O'er flowing love ... form true :
God is Love.

her divine face, "open and shut with the appearance and disappearance of countless worlds now illuminated by her light, now wrapped in her terrible darkness." She is the Sapphire Devi of Indraneela eyes.

The Tantrika, be it known, more than all men, recognizes the divinity of a woman. Spirit alone can understand Spirit. A Saktha alone can understand a Saktha. Even in his exuberance a Saktha does not reveal everything. The poem may thererore appear to be staccato and disjointed. Lines 5 to 8 clearly reveal that Bharati contemplates the Devi as Ichcha-Sakti-Gnaana-Sakti-Kriya-Sakti-Svarupini. As Woodroffe would say: "Tri-pura is threefold, as Brahma, Vishnu and Isha; and as the energies desire, wisdom, and action; the energy of will when Brahman would create; the energy of wisdom when she reminds Him, saying "Let this be thus"; and when thus knowing, He acts, She becomes the energy of action.

Thus is the manifestation of Shabda-Brahman in a triad of energies celebrated by Bharati in this hymn.

Notes

Lines 1-2: She did ascend:

The altar of mind is Gana Parvata in the "Abode of Snow", thronged with trains of Devayoni (Spirits).

Lines 3-5: She ascends union:

The Alcove of Light is the "Abode of Snow". Munis are holy sages. They are the pollen-dust of the Devi's fragrant feet.

Line 6: The Hall of Gnosis:

It is Chithakaas.

Line 7: Virgin-Rati:

This has no reference to Manmatha's wife. Rati is Love And Love is virgin-fire. It is in this fire the gold of devotee's heart is purified.

Line 11: Valli the Huntress: by Shakti-Sambhu Vanu Trust Donations

This is Muruka-Sakti, all-purifying untamed beauty.

Line 13: the lotus-born :

The lotus is the pure heart.

Line 14: Uma :

The Inseparable Consort of Siva.

"Para-shiva exists as a septenary under the form, firstly, of Shambu, who is the associate of time (Kaala-bandhu). From Him issues Sada-shiva, Who pervades and manifests all things, and then come Ishaana and the triad, Rudra, Vishnu and Brahma, each with their respective Shakti (without whom they avail nothing) separately and particularly associated with the gunas. Of these Devas, the last triad, together with Ishana and Sada-Shiva, are the five Shivas who are collectively known as the Maha-preta... Of the Maha-preta, it is said that the last four form the support, and the fifth the seat, of the bed on which the Devi is united, with Parama-Shiva, in the room of chintamani stone, on the jewelled island clad with clumps of kadamba and heavenly trees set in the ocean of Ambrosia."

Woodroffe.

Lines 17-18: Her ambrosial.. itself :

She is guna-nidhi (treasure-house of guna.) She is Sachchidananda Svarupini.

Line 19: Queen of women :

To a true Sakta, every woman is Ambika.

Line 22: her language is Logos :

Siva-Sakti indeed is the "Word."

"As the substance of Devi is maatrika (maatrika-maayi) the (inverted) triangle represents the "Word" of all that exists."

Woodroffe.

கண்ணம்மா — நீயே ரதி

நின்னையே ரதியென்று .

நினைக்கிறேனடி — கண்ணம்மா !

(நின்னையே)

தன்னையே சசியென்று

சரண மெய்தினேன்.

(நின்னையே)

1. பொன்னையே நிகர்த்தமேனி மின்னையே நிகர்த்த சாயற்
பின்னையே — நித்ய கன்னியே, — கண்ணம்மா !

(நின்னையே)

2. மாரணம் புகளென்மீது வாரிவாரி வீசநீ — கண்
பாராயோ — வந்து சேராயோ, — கண்ணம்மா !

(நின்னையே)

3. யாவுமே சுகமுனிக் கொரிசனா மெனக்குன் தோற்றம்
மேவுமே இங்கு யாவுமே — கண்ணம்மா !

(நின்னையே)

Introductory Remarks

The yearning of a Sakta is the theme of this hymn.

Chandra, also called Sasi (Moon) is a significant symbol of Sakti-worship.

Says Woodroffe: "The parang-vindu is represented as a circle, the centre of which is the brahma-pada, or place of Brahman, wherein are Prakriti-Purusha, the circumference of which is encircling-maya. It is on the crescent of *nirvana-kalā*, the seventeenth, which is again in that of *āma-kalā*, the sixteenth digit of the moon-circle (Chandra-mandala), which circle is situate above the Suu-circle (Suryyamandala), the Guru and the *hangsah*, which are in the pericarp of the thousand-petalled lotus (*sahasrarapadma*)."

Bharati was ever after this Chandramandala. Elsewhere he says :

Thou Art Rati Kannamma !

Rati art thou ! So do I think
Vinay Avasthi Sahib Bhuvan Vani Trust Donations

Oh Kannamma ! Thou art Sasi

Rati art thou ...

And in thee I do seek refuge.

Rati art thou ...

Golden is thy frame, Oh Pinnai

Rati art thou ...

Lightning-like, Virgin-Eternal !

With his darts Maara rifles me

Oh, behold me and come to me.

For Sukha-Muni all is God ;

Thou to me art all, Kannamma !

Rati art thou ...

'Tis thee I behold everywhere !

" Seethak Kathir Mathi Mer Chenru Paaanthanku
 Thane Unnuvaai Maname. "

[" O Mind, dart swift to the moist Moon
 And there shalt thou on honey feast. "]

Notes.

Line 2 : Sasi :

Sasi (Sasin) is the Moon, so called from the marks on the moon being considered to resemble a hare (Sasa).

Line 4 : Pinnai :

Pinnai is shortened form of Nappinnai. She is Radha who is Krishna-Sakti.

Line 6 : Maara :

This Maara is not Manmath. He is the Prince of Darkness. He with his host (darts) thwarts the Sadhaka.

Cf. "... But he is the Prince

Of Darkness, Mara—knowing this was Buddh

Who should deliver men, and now the hour

When he should find the truth and save the worlds—

Gave unto all his evil powers command."

The Light of Asia, Book the sixth.

Manimekalai hails the Buddha as the Hero who triumphs over Maara (Maaranai Vellum Veera).

Line 8 : Sukha - Muni :

He is the son of Vyasa, the codifier of Vedas. Bharati's veneration for St. Sukha knows no bounds. The Tamil Saint Thaayumanavar celebrates the glory of St. Sukha in his hymns. In his preface to his Tamil translation of the Bhagavad Gita, Bharati quotes a distich of Thaayumanavar glorifying St. Sukha. This saint beheld God in everything.

Message : It is in Rati, the rhythm of the world is established.

When gold is smelted, it melts into liquid.

When that liquid is heated, it becomes air (gas).

Like this, all things can be reduced to the state of air.

Air is physical powder.

We worship the power that rides this as Vayu-Deva.

The flying path of crow is air.

The operator of this path is air.

In that path, he that directs its movement is Air.

We worship him.

Unto Life do we surrender."

Thus does Bharati air out his views on air. This is a poem which takes off in the air, leans on space and reminds us of their infinitudes. The opening line of this poem is as elusive as air itself. When the words of Bharati are heated by a translation, they become gaseous and refuse to stay.

Karru veliyedaye (காற்று வெளியிடையே) may mean காற்றிடையே, வெளியிடையே and காற்றுவெளியிடையே (in wind, in space, in wind and space) But whatever it may be, it is for Bharati, the stuff of Love.

Notes

Lines 1-2: Where wind.....thy life:

Love is refreshing like the wind and spacious as space itself.

Lines 3-10: Thy lips ... Kannamma:

Love divine sweetens thinking and enriches the mind beyond measure. An enriched mind is Elysium itself. Peace and euphoria are the true gifts of Love. And Love, for Bharati is Kannamma. When he thinks on Her, he is soused in bliss. Elsewhere he says:

" 'Tis enough if you think; mere thought causes
This cool ambrosia to flood inly."

(Para-Siva Vellam)

Lines 13-14:— Gone where...to thee :

Cf. (i) Si Deus pro nobis, quis contra nos ?

(If God be for us, who can be against us ?)

Romans, viii, 31. Vulgate.

(ii) "Where God will helpen, nought can harm."

(iii) "Whom God will help, nae man can hinder."

A Scottish Proverb.

Line 15-16: My mouth . . . thy name :

Cf அண்ணிக்கும் அமுதூறும் என் நாவுக்கே.

(Sweet ambrosia seeps in my mouth)

Mathurakavi.

Line 18 : Chittha :

It is the mind or heart as the seat of affection.

(24)

நந்தலாலா

காக்கைச் சிறகினிலே நந்தலாலா — நின்றன்
கரியநிறம் தோன்றுதையே நந்தலாலா ;

பார்க்கு மரங்க ளெல்லாம் நந்தலாலா — நின்றன்
பச்சை நிறம் தோன்றுதையே நந்தலாலா ;

கேட்கு மொலியி லெல்லாம் நந்தலாலா — நின்றன்
கீத மிசைக்குதடா நந்தலாலா ;

தீக்குள் விரலைவத்தால் நந்தலாலா — நின்னைத்
தீண்டு மின்பந் தோன்றுதடா நந்தலாலா.

Introductory Remarks

"If we find agni, meaning fire, in Sanskrit, and ignis, meaning fire in Latin, we may safely conclude that fire was known to the undivided Aryans, even if no trace of the same name of fire occurred anywhere else And why? Because there is no indication that Latin remained longer with Sanskrit than any of the other Aryan languages, or that Latin could have borrowed such a word from Sanskrit, after these two languages had once become distinct. We have however the Lituianian *ugnis*, and the Scottish *ingle*, to show that Slavonic and possibly the Teutonic languages also, knew the same word for fire, though they replaced it in time by other words."

Max Muller, Lecture I, What India Can Teach Us.

This agni is called *thee* (தீ) in Tamil. Bharati says :
"And I thrill with your touch, Krishna
when my finger feels the flame."

Nandalaal ✓

- It is thy darksome hue O Nandalaal
That I behold in the feathers of crows ;
It is thy jasper tint, O Nandalaal
That I behold in the verdure o' boskage ;
5. It is thy melody, O Nandalaal
That every sound breathes so rapturously ;
'Tis thy sweet touch I feel, O Nandalaal
When I the flame with my fingers caress.
-

Can this be so, even so? We shall see.

Fire is of several types. The physical fire is known to us. We see this burn everyday. If we touch it, we get burnt. We cry in pain. Superior to this, is an agni called **Jadaragni**. This is what which digests our food. If we throw a plantain fruit on a coal of burning fire, the fire gets quenched. Even if we throw a dozen plantains into the stomach-pit where Jadaragni abides, the Jadaragni is unquenched. Then there is the elemental fire, that of the lightning. This is far superior to Jadaragni. This can annihilate whole cities. But this fire cannot burn **Karma** (the effect of deeds and misdeeds). A greater fire is required to do this. This fire is called **Gnaanagni**. Gnaanagni is the flame of Wisdom. This is emitted by the Third Eye of Lord Siva. This fire is cool. As the Vedas say : "It burns wet". When the soul laves in this flame, it feels ineffably ecstatic and that is called the "Krishna-touch".

Hanuman's tail was set on fire. Mother Sita breathed a prayer. Hanuman received the "Sita-touch". "The Vaanar felt the heat no more." He stood,

"A sun engarlanded with rays "

Tr. R. T. H. Griffith.

The flame on Hanuman's tail did its work of reducing Lanka to cinders and ashes. It did not harm Hanuman. On the contrary it served him as a dutiful servant.

Poison is dangerous to us, not to the snake. Flame burns but not the sun. Be Hanuman; be Soorya. Then with Bharati you can say: "I lave my finger in the flame and feel Kannan."

Notes.

Lines 1-2 : It is ... crows :

"Is black so base a hue?" asks Aaron.

Titus Andronicus, Act IV, Sc. 2.

The base Moor Aaron says :

"Coal-black is better than another hue,

In that it scorns to bear another hue;

For all the water in the ocean

Can never turn a swan's black legs to white,

Although she lave them hourly in the flood." *Ibid*

Truth is truth, by whomsoever spoken.

Nandalal, also known as Nandakumar, meaning son of Nanda @ Nandagopa is Kannan, the lion-cub of Yasoda. Kannan's cathartic hue fills blessed eyes.

Thondar Adri Poḍi Aazhwaar calls the **Bold** "A Mountain of greenery". The fecund mountain is studded with trees whose green foliage covers the mountain.

Lines 5-6: It is ... rapturously :

The Krishna - touch comes in sound as well as colour.

Lines 7-8: 'Tis thy ... caress :

This is the purifying 'deeksha'. Fire is a purifier.

Cf. "The sight of the flames maddens me with pleasure."

Walt Whitman, A Song of Joys.

Message :

"All can be done if the God-touch is there."

Sri Aurobindo, Savitri.

கண்ணன் திருவடி

1. கண்ணன் திருவடி எண்ணுக மனமே
திண்ணம் அழியா வண்ணந் தருமே.
2. தருமே நிதியும் பெருமை புகழும்
கருமா மேனிப் பெருமா னிங்கே.
3. இங்கே யமரர் சங்கந் தோன்றும்
மங்கும் தீமை ; பொங்கும் நலமே.
4. நலமே நாடிற் புலவீர் பாடர்.
நிலமா மகளின் தலைவன் புகழே.
5. புகழ் வீர் கண்ணன் தகைசே ரமரர்
தொகையோ டசுரப் பகைதீர்ப் பதையே.
6. தீர்ப்பான் இருளைப் பேர்ப்பான் கலியை
ஆர்ப்பா ரமரர் பார்ப்பார் தவமே.
7. தவரு துணர்வீர் புவியீர் ! மாலும்
சிவனும் வானோர் எவரும் ஒன்றே.
8. ஒன்றே பலவாய் நின்றோர் சக்தி
என்றுந் திகழும் குன்று வொளியே.

Introductory Remarks.

The original is in 'anthaathi' form. In anthaathi the last word, syllable or phrase of a preceding stanza is repeated as the first word, syllable or phrase in the succeeding stanza. Anthaathi is 'Anaphoretic Verse' according to Dr. G. U. Pope. This pattern is followed in the translation also.

KANNAN'S DIVINE FEET ✓

Kannan's feet divine, oh mind, meditate ;
Faith and firmness eternal will they grant.

Grant for sure, riches, greatness and renown
He will, the black-tinted God, here and now.

5. Here and now will be the Deva-Sanga ;
Evil will pale and will, aye, flourish weal.

Weal if you are after, oh ye poets
The Lord of Dame Earth and His glory, sing.

Sing Him, the Victor of the Immortals

10. Who for them the Asura host doth quell.

Quell He will darkness and dire Kali too ;
Rejoicing Immortals will tapas hail.

Hail without fail and know, ye of the earth
That Maal, Siva and Celestials are one.

15. One doth turn many -the single puissance,
It endureth, aye, for ever undimmed.

God is above names and forms. Harindranath
Chattopadhyaya sings thus :

"Nataraj, the red-fire dancer
Poised in peace and clad in storms
Dances in his lonely rapture
On the burning ghat of forms"

Christianity, according to Milton, concedes form to
Godhead. Milton says :

"Our safest way is to form in our minds such a conception of God, as shall correspond with His delineation and representation of Himself in the sacred writings. For granting that both in the literal and figurative descriptions of God, He is, exhibited not really as He is, but in such a manner as may be within the scope of our comprehension : yet we ought to entertain such a conception of Him, as He in condescending to accommodate Himself to our capacities, has shown that he desires that we should conceive. For it is on this very account that he had lowered Himself to our level, lest in our flights above the reach of human understanding and beyond the word of scripture, we should be tempted to indulge in vague cogitation and subtleties."

The Christian Doctrine.

So when God is conceived with a form, the most important part of that form is his F E E T. Saiva Siddhanta calls the Feet, Gnosis (Pathy Gnaanam, Grace). Grace is known by and through Grace only. This is the meaning of "Avan Arulale Avan Thaal Vananki" (By his Grace adoring his Feet).

Thiruvalluvar never bothered to describe the form of God. But he said: "Of what avail is all thy learning if thou worship not the holy feet of Him of the perfect intelligence."

— (Tr. V. V. S. Iyer.)

"Kannan's feet divine, oh mind, meditate."

Notes.

Lines 1-2 : Kannan's feet they grant :

Of the Feet of the Lord, Maanickavaachakar says : "They are beyond all the seven nether worlds." *The Kuyil-Decad.*

The figure employed in the second line is hendiadys.

Lines 3-4 : Grant for sure.. here and now :

A prayer for the trinkets of life is also permitted in the initial stages. Knowing that an ice-candy will ill-agree with the child's health, the mother gets it for her child when the latter importunes her. The Lord gives us the right to do the wrong only to make us eventually learn from experience. The free-will is ours. When we turn out to be bad managers, we consent to transfer our powers to the abler hands.

Lines 5-6: Here and now...flourish weal:

The Deva-Sanga is the "Thirukkootam", "The Association of the Immortal Devotees." Bharati knows the earth to the Lord's; but "the fulness thereof" is achieved by His devotees only who are the apostles of Heaven.

Lines 7-8: Weal if you...sing:

According to Vaishnavism, Mother-Earth is one of the spouses of the Lord. The Bible says: "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof."

Psalms XXIV, 1. N. T. 1 Corinthians, X, 26, 28.

Real weal and welfare consists in singing the glories of the Lord

Line 9-10: Quell He will...tapas hail:

Darkness is Avidhya according to Vedantam, and Aanavamalam according to Siddhantam. Kali is but an effect of Darkness. When the cause is no more, the effect ceases.

Lines 11: Hail without fail:

Cf. "Behold the men who cleave unto the feet of Him who is beyond preference and beyond aversion: the ills of life touch them not ever." *Kural, Tr. V. V. S. Iyer.*

Highest tapas leads to selfless adoration.

Lines 12-14: Ye of...undimmed:

Cf. "Truth is one; sages call it by various names."

Rg. Veda.

வேயங்குழல்

எங்கிருந்து வருகுவதோ — ஒலி
யாவர் செய்குவதோ ? — அடி தோழி

1. குன்றினின்றும் வருகுவதோ ? — மரக்
கொம்பி னின்றும் வருகுவதோ — வெளி
மன்றி னின்று வருகுவதோ — என்றன்
மதி மருண்டிடச் செய்குதல் — (இஃதெங்கிருந்து)
2. அலையொ லித்திடும் தெய்வ — யமுனை
யாற்றி னின்றும் ஒலிப்பதுவோ — அன்றி
இலையொ லிக்கும் பொழிலிடை நின்றும்
எழுவ தோ இஃதின்னமு தைப்போல் — (எங்கிருந்து)
3. காட்டினின்றும் வருகுவதோ — நிலாக்
காற்றைக் கொண்டு தருகுவதோ — வெளி
நாட்டினின்றும் தித் தென்றல் கொணர்வதோ
நாத மிஃதெ னுயிரை யுருக்குதே — (எங்கிருந்து)
4. பறவை யேதுமொன்றுள் ளதுவோ — இங்ஙன்
பாடு மோஅமு தக்கனற் பாட்டு ?
மறைவி னின்றுங் கின்னர ராதியர்
வாத்தி யத்தி னிசைமிது வோஅடி — (எங்கிருந்து)
5. கண்ண னூதிடும் வேயங்குழல் தானல்
காதி லேயமு துள்ளத்தில் நஞ்சு
பண்ணன் ருமடி பாவையர் வாடப்
பாடி யெய்திடும் அம்படி தோழி (எங்கிருந்து)

The Flute

"O tell me where my Flute-player abides"

Sarojini Naidu.

Whence this sound? Who breathes it my friend?

Is it from hill or branch of tree?

From court without? It 'wilders me.

Whence this sound?

'Sit from wave-toss'd river Jumna?

5. Is this nectar from leafy grove?

Whence this sound?

From the wood? Or moon-showered airs?

By rural zephyr? Life it melts.

Whence this sound?

Can a bird sing such nectar-flame?

'Sit unseen Kinnar's orchestra?

Whence this sound?

10. Ha, 'tis the flute that Kannan breathes:

For ear nectar, for bosom gall.

No mel'dy are these, my Lady

But song-arrows to kill damsels.

Introductory Remarks

The beloved is dying in the loneliness of the world's loud noises. She is self-slain with doubt. The magic tumult of winged choristers, their blithe carols, their cadenced rapture—all these awaken in her no response. Suddenly a sweet sound pierces her bosom, with its edge of flaming rapture. It saddens her with sweetness, and sweetness her with sadness. It is a sad delight, a sweet melancholy. It has a pleasing effect. It is a sweet desolation, a sweet grief. She wants to identify this mellifluous sorrow. For a time it escapes her. Then the sound claims itself for her. It is the flute of the Divine Vagabond that breathes such impassioned love and pain. As Rumi says :

“Hearken, hearken to the Reed.”

Line 1 : Whence ... my friend :

This is a soliloquy. The friend is the soul.

Line 2 : Is it ... of tree ? :

Cf. “In the music that thro’ the boskage thrids”

The Song of the Kuyil, Line 106.

Line 3 : From court without :

Cf. “In the songs that the woods and the rural seats

Do reverberate for ever” *Ibid., Lines 126-127.*

Line 4 : ‘Sit from ... river Jumna ? :

Cf. “In the roar of the river and the cataract”

Ibid., Line 107.

Line 5 : Is this ... leafy grove ? :

Cf. “There in that grove on a beauteous morn—

—A day of spree, as the hunters came not—

A kuyil impassioned sat majestic

On a high branch and trilled her sugary notes.”

Ibid., Lines 12-15.

Lines 6-7 : From the wood? it melts :
Maya, the celestial child Bhuvān, the earth Donations

Cf. (i) "In the liquid ditties of the sylvan birds"

Ibid., Line 105.

(ii) "Oh, it was as if ambrosial airs

With the air blended" *Ibid., Lines 21-22:*

(iii) "My life melts ..."

Ibid., Line 271.

Lines 8-9 : Can a bird ... orchestra ? :

Cf. (i) "Could she be a Dryad of Paradise

That to the earth had come, a bird incarnate
 Her melodious grandeur to assert ?"

Ibid., Lines 24-26.

(ii) "A visitant from heaven"

Dr. K. R. S. Iyengar, Leaves from a Log.

Line 10 : Ha, 'tis ... breathes :

The flame-sweet fire-message is now known.

Lines 11-14 : For ear ... damsels :

See pages III to XVII, Notes to the Song of the Kuyil.

கிருஷ்ணஞ்சலி

1. வேத வானில் விளங்கி “அறஞ் செய்மின்
சாதல் நேரினுஞ் சத்தியம் பூனுமின்
தீத கற்றுமின்” என்று திசையெலாம்
மோத நித்தம் இடித்து முழக்கியே
2. உண்ணுஞ் சாதிக் குறக்கமும் சாவுமே
நண்ணு ருவண நன்கு புரந்திடும்
எண்ண ரும்புகழ்க் கீதையெனச் சொலும்
பண்ண மிழ்தத் தருள்மழை பாலித்தே
3. எங்க ளாரிய பூமியெனும் பயிர்
மங்க ளம்பெற நித்தலும் வாழ்விக்கும்
துங்க முற்ற துணைமுகி லேமலர்ச்
செங்க ணய்நின் பதமலர் சிந்திப்பாம்
4. வீரர் தெய்வதம் கர்ம விளக்குநற்
பார தர்செய் தவத்தின் பயனெனும்
தார விரந்த தடம்புயப் பார்த்தனோர்
கார ணம்மெனக் கொண்டு கடவுணீ
5. நின்னை நம்பி நிலத்திடை யென்றுமே
மன்னு பாரத மாண்குலம் யாவிற்கும்
உன்னுங் காலை உயர்துணை யாகவே
சொன்ன சொல்லை யுயிரிடைச் சூடுவாம்.
6. ஐய கேளினி யோர்சொல் ! அடியர்யாம்
உய்ய நின்மொழி பற்றி யொழுகியே
மைய றும்புகழ் வாழ்க்கை பெறற்கெனச்
செய்யுஞ் செய்கையி னின்னருள் சேர்ப்பையால்.

(27)

KRISHNANJALI II

Rising bright in Vedic Skye's Expanse

You thunder vibrant all the directions :

"Practise righteousness ; from Truth never swerve,
Though doomed to death ; abolish all evil. "

5. You expound the Gita of endless fame
Which doth like ambrosial music rain,
Panoplying the consuming race against
The onslaught of morbid slumber and death.

You do guard our crops, the Aarya-Varta

10. And make it thrive and prosper ; O our Aid
Exalted ! O Cloud ! O Lord of flower-soft
Red eyes ! We will your flower-feet meditate.

Arjuna—heroes' idol, lamp o' Karma,
Fruit of tapas wrought by sons of Bharat,

15. Broad-shouldered, wearer of blowing garlands—
Were to you, in sooth, a chance pretext.

O God, we treasure in our very ' life '
Your assurance that You 'll the lofty help
Be, to all the sons of Bharat, that firm

20. Believe you, and live meditating You.

Lord, hearken to a word ; we are your slaves ;
To Your Word conforming, we play our part
To attain blemishless life of renown ;
Do bless our acts with Your energising grace.

All Tamil classics inclusive of Sangam literature have nothing but unalloyed veneration for the Vedas. Vedas are concerned with the life and welfare of Man. They tell him of life here as well as hercafter. Hence their unique glory.

Bharati wants us to live a life in conformity with the Vedas. He says: "If I cannot live a noble life, then let me perish." Bharati will never compromise

Notes

Lines 1-2: Rising.. directions :

Vedas are the most ancient literary documents. Addressing the candidates of the Indian Civil Service, at Cambridge, Max Muller said: "...the Vedas can teach us lessons which nothing else can teach..."

(Lecture IV, India-What can it teach us?)

The Vedic hymns according to Max Muller are "snow-clad peaks, representing to us, from a far distance, the whole mountain-range of a nation, completely lost beyond the horizon of history."

Ibid.

Lines 3-4: "Practise...abolish all evil" :

Righteousness is virtuous living. Milton says :

"Love Virtue; she alone is free.

She can teach ye how to climb

Higher than the sphery chime;

Or, if Virtue feeble were,

Heaven itself would stoop to her."

Comus.

The last two lines of the above quotation contain the promise of Kannan as covenanted by the Gita.

Lines 5-8: He expounds...and death :

A true revelation is a daily—nay—an hourly revelation. It never ceases. It pours like a continuous rain. Of Kannan, Bharati elsewhere says :

"His words of grace benign are like a flood

That washes clean the stagnating waters

Of their long-festering moss odious;

Thus does he wash us of our weaknesses."

Kannan—My Friend.

Line 9: ~~our crops, the Arya-Varta:~~ Vinay Vasthi Sanib Dhruvan am Trust Donations

Many alien beasts have laid waste the crops from time to time. Yet the crops will not go out of existence. For they grow in a field, dear to Kannan.

Lines 12-16: Arjuna...pretext:

Inscrutable are the words of the Lord. Moses was only a pretext for the advent of the Ten Commandments.

Line 20: ...and live meditating You:

This indeed is the refrain of this Hymn.

See line 12. Elsewhere Bharati says:

"Kannan's feet divine, oh mind, meditate"

The Gita (ix, 22) says: "But those who worship Me, meditating Me alone, to them who ever persevere, I bring attainment of what they have not and security in what they have."

Tr. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan.

Line 21: ...We are your slaves:

Cf. (i) "Refuge none to me this world offereth

'Wildered and distressed, this pariah poor

Seek in thee refuge, succour me O Lord!

I pray unto thee, succour me O Lord!"

Kannan-My Manor-Lord.

(ii) "I seek refuge in thee O Kannamma,

Refuge, I do seek in thee Kannamma!"

Kannamma-Our Family-Deity.

Line 24: Do bless ... energising grace:

Cf. (i) "Grace itself's goodly light

If light you doubt

Murk will out."

The Song of the Kuyil.

(ii) "Alack, when once our grace we have forgot

Nothing goes right"

Shakespeare.

(iii) "Prevenient grace descending had remov'd

The stony from their hearts"

Milton.

(iv) ^{Vinayakar Stotra Bhagavati Mani Trust Donations} "Hail to thee, lady! and the grace of heaven
Before, behind thee and on every hand;
Enwheel thee round "

Othello, 2, 1, 85.

Lines 25 to 28 : With loftiness ... saving Feet :

Cf. " Rid of all shackles of ancient karma
Full well must I discharge my duties all ;
All light-giving knowledge I must possess ;
For this, O God ! bestow on me Thy looks
Of grace that I may live here sans blemish. "
Vinayakar Naan Mani Maalai, st. 9.

Line 32. We will not live empty, waste and perish :

Cf. (i) " 'Ll you make me live a mere burden on earth ?"
Bharati : Tr. T. N. R.

(ii) " Daily hunt for a mess o' pottage,
Daily twaddle insipid tales,
Hourly wilt with a mind forlorn,
Scatter grief by sordid deeds,
Graceless age into dotage vile,
Then die a prey of dire Yama :
Thus perish a good many clowns ;
Dare you deem me one among these ? "
Bharati. Tr. T. N. R.

Lines 35-36 : Consume us ... glory :

Cf. " Slay moha, or stop my breath. "

Bharati, Tr. T. N. R.

Motto of Bharati : " Entelechy or Extinction "

Message : Kannan's grace never fails.

AFTERWORD

Vinay Avasthi Sahib Bhuvan Vani Trust Donations

S. A. Sankaranarayanan

The Song of the Kuyil sanctified my ears
And my eyes were aglow for Kannan's advent.
What Bharati creates, TNR can transcreate.
I leafed thro' the formes, ambitious to sense
The second coming of the original
With attendant ache and yearning and joy.
From time to time
Grew a sense and a claim
In me as I went on
To pause and exclaim :
The magic Bharati wove, was unwoven
And re-woven into self-same magic ;
The same perfume, without fret and fume,
The same colour, without loss of glint,
The same seraph, in an alien habit,
The same opus, with little of fuss,
If pain there was, God only knew ;
But somewhere it is ... hid from view.
I have heard it said in legends of yore
That an Asura-child, even at its birth
Is as old as the mother itself.
Proof is there in T. N. R's —
Old and grand and parent-like.
The swaddling clothes are the Notes indeed
To keep the new-born in poesy's warmth.
Now to Kannan and Kannamma.
Bharati's love for Kannan and Kannamma —
An inner event it was

And it had a time, ITS time, an inner time.

It had its duree 're' elle,

And it stepped aside

Giving a continuous farewell.

But no staying after start

And the language learnt a way

Of forgiving itself.

Words jubilated overcrowding

With a pre - historic innocence

To clap and dance in groups

At the accoustic of the lilt

In the original of the lay.

The effort summarized

The flooding at times

Into a plastic art

Of multiform, and expressive,

And broad - backed type.

What buttressings !

What stairs, what columns !

Worth every reader's hope !

I am not comparatist

Yet as I slithered thro' the lines

On the planet of beggars

I gladly recalled

Yeats' refrains, such as :

1. Beggar to beggar cried being frenzy struck

2. And there the king is but as the beggar

I won a feeling of succession.

The original Paragon

Pushed me into the lustra

And to the present rendering

- With a Latin quality of salt -

My lips bid a welcome

To the second coming of the original
Real as the original marmoreal.

Man woman became, and vice versa.
Yet in this antithetical affair
When it was all Kannamma
The language became a cloak;
And when it was all Kanna
Was it limerance brought home
—That obsessional divine
In the lyrics of love?—
Brought out by telling,
By every peaked wave
That rowed ashore the windy words
And the translator in a trance.

As we all know,
Each language has a plumage
Which makes it heavy or light.
FNR knows it best, you see —
Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi!
And the effort Ash-like had risen high
Enough into a luxuriance
Dislodging the bias and hazard
And sheltered the bird and the bard in one
And shook and sang with all the astrals
Who ciphered and sang congenially.

A sea-drift and observatory
As it was, opened perspectives numberless.
Now with a human touch and away.
Now with a trailing reflex and away.
A world line writ long ago
The jiva-gati or the pietetis imago,

Many many came to be read
 Through the bespangled rings of light
 In the skiey bowers of thought.
 Rings of chelation, light unbroken
 That filled the void and found repose
 In the act of the singer and the seer !
 Wherein happy Homer hovered with Vergil
 While golden-thigh'd Pythagoras, his skill,
 And Erasmus and Plato—
 All with their shares brew'd their celestial julep.
 Emerson the Brahmin was brought
 For sustaining the fire,
 And the light ample amplified
 Bloomed into a warmth
 That tended to a sufic shiver
 What Tantra shastra it all was
 That set an optative mood
 In a certain medium
 In a certain idiom which was a triumph.
 A divine zany gush !
 Words turned parrots and gabbled praise !
 In a superior gossippy contumacious vein.

 With a great case of rarer shells
 A river of inner directions,
 A supreme inundation—with
 Its maker and its muse at beck and call
 Came flooding thro' TNR's pages
 And made music all over—
 Setting the serene fully free.
 A sound of a great Pedigree.

 I gazed in wonder
 The site and the rite

and the outcoming viands
 The sky entire was spread over
 The jambu—dweepa
 With its gold brocaded constellations
 And the void became voiced
 and Vedas resounded ;
 When in wonder ground
 Myself, an eidolon as gold inlaid
 Heavily slept and found
 In recurrent dreams that stayed.
 Bharati from the radius
 Of the ultimate Ideation
 Came adown flesh and blood
 In another creation.
 The mined meaning's deep
 Which ranged beyond sense
 Then came afloat predicable
 In sheer phosphorescence.
 I felt it was a work
 Of an arch-chemic
 and noble metallurgy
 And like the fabled mongoose
 I frisked about
 And found myself turning golden
 All over in an auric coat
 Aflame instantaneously.

Right now I am
 At the feet of this tree
 My Ficus Religiosa.

APPENDIX

(I)

(The Mentor)

A Pensketch of Poet Tri Loka Sitaram

By Prof. T R. Kuppuswamy Iyer, M A., U. N. Fellow.

[Prof Kuppuswamy of Hyderabad, till recently preceptor of the deaf-and-dumb school, is a connoisseur of all that is noble in life and literature. His mild looks belie a mighty mind. The title "Servant of Humanity" can rightly be applied to him Viva La Professeur !]

M. S. Nadar.

"Yonder stands Kavignar of whom I have spoken to you often."

I always credit poetry in a person like Rabindranath Tagore.

Broad forehead, a well-shaped nose, 'the rudder of the face', hair neatly done down his nape, a flowing beard, a silk robe hanging loose lending royal grace, these go well with Poetry.

But we have here a contrast with vengeance. Short on legs, commonplace looks, shaven head and face, a vermilion dot between the guarding eyebrows, a plebian nondescript upper wear, covered on occasions with a saffron shawl. Mounted on the saddle of his nose is a pair of glasses over the rims of which he looks at you pedagogue-like now and then. In company of strangers he keeps mum. Once he is addressed and provoked, down comes an avalanche of weighty words, that crumbles doubts and opposition. The roar ceases, its echo dying at a distance in feeble laughter. Whatever the subject, be it the internal combustion engine or astronomy, he will speak with authority, with expert knowledge ungarnered. Admirers of S. T. Coleridge will not fail to note his touches in Kavignar as a conversationalist. It is interesting to learn that his learned talks are measured against gold. On and off he writes short articles which have been collected and published under

the title "Ilakkiya Padagu"; some of them deal with contemporary events and some on subjects of unending interest. The style is simple, terse and trenchant.

Do you know that his schooling stopped with the eighth standard?

No; to my knowledge the school days of many a talented person have been chequered.

Tagore did not have regular schooling.

Shakespeare was un-schooled, self-taught.

We are inclined to say with Arnold

'Better so' !

There is a striking point of resemblance between Shakespeare and Tagore on the one hand and Kavignar on the other. Poets usually have been noted for their penury. But these two and a few others have been exceptions. Tagore was a lover of nature and life. He was very practical. Viswabharathi is his creation. He yearned to realise Godhead through service to man. Shakespeare, the greatest of poets, took care to put money in his purse and drive indigence away from his doors. Kavignar runs a printing press and a scholarly monthly journal. Supervision of a garage engages him now and then. He is not one of those poets who flatter the opulent with a view to oil their light and keep the wick in good trim.

Kavignar's genius has another sparkling facet. Translation, particularly of poetry, is an impossible job. Faithful rendering in a different language with all the spirit and beauty of the original intact is a Utopian dream. But our Kavignar is an exception. To him it is child's play. He possesses the rare talent of absorbing the original and reproducing it wholly in a different garb. Hesse's 'Siddhartha' and Karl Marx's 'Das Capital' have been rendered by him into Tamil with amazing fidelity to the original in syntax and content.

Another noteworthy aspect in our poet is his unqualified admiration of poets of rank, present and past. Subramanya Bharati holds his special esteem. On many an occasion I have

heard him recite his lines with gusto, from his uncanny memory. Mediocre poets have his sympathy, but pretenders are held in scorn.

Have you ever observed him, while composing a poem ?

I have not had the good fortune. But

I have watched a poet of merit doing so years ago.

Showkatali Fawni was resting with his eyes closed in an easy-chair. I had gone in to see him on official work.

I found his fingers twitching and his eye balls rolling beneath the thin pale eye-lids. A ripple danced about his lips

Suddenly he awoke, sat up, seized pen and paper and wrote off a pageful.

The poetic fit ceased. Looking up he saw me and apologised for not noticing my presence earlier.

Not so our Kavignar Poetry is at his beck and call. In between dressing betel-leaves, correcting proofs, answering telephone call or speaking with customers and friends, he scribbles a few lines. The poem builds up by fits and starts and it never receives a retouch. Once I had the audacity to inquire of him whether the continuity was not spoiled by his breaks. 'Nothing of that kind. I wield the pen whenever I want and the poem takes shape' he said.

Have you read his poems ?

No, I have heard his praise only from you.

Oh what a pity it is that his poems are not widely read and appreciated ! How much knowledge and truth in a short compass ! The gems of purest ray serene sparkle and man has neither time nor leisure, nor interest to 'stand and stare'. He is blind to its brilliance. Ethereal fragrance is wafted, but alas ! it is unheeded by stuffed heads and palsied hearts ! You have indeed missed much in not having read Kavignar's poems. Even supposing you have neither enough Tamil in you nor poetry, you may, with profit, read them with their translation

by Sri T. N. Ramachandran. The foot-notes that the talented writer has provided reveal that our poet combines in himself the brightest poetic flashes of the Occident and the abiding luminosity of the Orient. Romanticism is his forte. The poet pours forth fancies unconceived and thoughts which are a challenge to master minds! Now they are of the Earth. By a wave of the wand they traverse through the regions luminous with angels. Human experience cast in the poetic-hot mould assumes dimensions too fine for description. In his hands the concepts of Time and Space, Light and Darkness, Life and Death, Earth and Sun, Water and Wind receive treatment that is strange and true at once

Has he any philosophy of his own?

He does not pose as a philosopher. But he is a philosopher in the sense that the essence that is embedded in the Upanishads, is open truth to him.

Has he any aim in writing the poems?

I do not think he is either didactic like Wordsworth, nor is he a social reformer like Bernard Shaw. I have often heard him ridicule Man's vanity when he endeavours to reform others. 'Let everyone live clean and take good care of himself. It is not worth while concerning yourself with heights that man can never surmount'.

Let me call a halt now. Why should I spoon-feed from a cup from his board? Come, grasp the bowl, quaff it and feel the 'Kick' the Kavignar gives!

Re-produced from SHIVAJI, Sep. 1970.

II

A Day With Tri Loka Sitaram

By Prof. K. G. Seshadri.

1

'Twas on a Tuesday afternoon, I think
That we got together at Mr Pillai's¹
A few miles off from Tanjore town,
To celebrate in effect the New Year's Day
As was usual with the group.

Besides the host, large and love-smiling
His hearty welcome lighting up the place,
There were the Poet,
The centre of the circle, as he always is ;
T. N. R. of Tanjore, the life and soul of the set ;
A few from Kumbakonam, (of whom I made one)
An official or two, an old scholar and his son,
Half a dozen girls, the amanuenses of our host,
When after tea, we settled down to hear ;
With anxious expectation of earfuls of lyric
And wisdom garnered from experience
And crystallized in vision,
From the hosting Mr. Pillai and the chief-guest, our poet,
The one and only T. L. S. — Triloka Sitaram to others.
It had no formal beginning, that's all I remember,
For on such occasions, as you know,
Most want to retire, snail-like to their shells ;
A few attempt something bright
But fail to make a mark or catch the chairman's eye,

Even if a thing or two does ultimately come up
Levered by their labouring Muse and confidently rendered.

The wisest and the wittiest need of course, no prodding,
Partly to save the day, or perhaps to break
The heavy silence as it weighs
Down upon the throng :
Partly as a challenge too, to their ever-creating ego,
They, the wise and witty, start to break the ice
And soon the talk is under way, — and silence is pleased !

Words pour out of lips that frame
Lovingly their shapes and sounds ;
Thought engenders thought, as syllables rush past
In sequential torrent outrunning the sense.
And as the poet-thinker 'gan to speak
I thought it meet to gather them
And set them down as analects.

2

I haven't begun my job yet ;
'In medias res' may it be !
Spake the poet T. L. S.,
Thus on Time and Life and Soul :
"Renew thyself momentarily and mistake not
The chain of action for the Soul ;
Nor deem it as yourself, the cluster
Of past remembrances : Your Ego isn't you !"
(And I thought of Proust and his
2. 'Ala Recherche du Temps perdu' !)
Learn to live the gap of time
That lies athwart the incidents ;
'Tis part of us and if not lived,
Well then, so much the time we spend

Is just a pile of wasted days.
 Time and we must blend in one
 To make the sum of Human Life !
 Every second we do die,
 (But Phoenix-like are born again)
 The aggregate of lives destroyed
 Is reckoned indeed as life.
 Isn't it odd" he asked
 : "From such decay creation springs ?
 What is known as deathlessness
 Is just a blend of so many deaths !
 Large life should suffer loss
 As with loss it larger grows !
 Every soul that doth exist
 Is part of THAT, eternal One.
 3. ('As water is in water' said I)
 The children grow with wondrous growth
 Changing forms and shapes and minds,
 In thews and bulk, muscle and gristle,
 Stumble and walk and lisp and talk,
 Learning things the harder way,
 By dint of pure experience ;
 All their past in limbo lost.
 But to me my past is wealth
 With which afresh my life I start,
 Vantage great, o'er child newborn !
 Did not 'Bharati proclaim
 'You are born anew this day !' ?
 Your past becomes an overplus
 Whereon to draw for future use."
 Said our poet once again,
 "Every moment we do die ;
 The deaths we die are passing fast,

And so are the births we undergo ;
 Over stepping-stones of time's bubbles
 We lightly cross the flowing stream."
 (Realizing the preciousness of annihilation's waste
 "West-wind like, we build and break
 And know the world for what it is)

3

The listening host till now silent,
 Nodding his head, now declared :
 "Where is wisdom, lost in facts,
 Where the knowledge, in wisdom veiled ? "
 "Lament ye not, what is past";
 Replied the poet T. L. S.
 And thus the ball to Kavignar's court.
 "The burden of learning is lightened
 In wholesome comprehension.
 Even as mortar, brick and stone
 Lose themselves in the finished house.
 Perpend, therefore, the oneness of things :
 As parts of whole merge into one
 We don't feel their several weights.
 The wise man wears his wisdom light,
 Unlike the Pundit his weary weight
 Of bits of facts which cohere not."
 ("The one remains", I butted in,
 "The many change and pass". (Alas !)
 T. L. S. then continued :
 "Home is sweet and safe because
 'Tis our own without a doubt.
 This apply to the world at large,
 Thou shalt surely rule the world.

Things and you do stand apart :

Fill the gap and feel the joy !”

⁹(Shades of **Burke** ! to me I said.)

“Oh, the joy of togetherness !”

4

And now the poet did ask of us,

“Why is giving such pleasure ?”

This he himself thus answered :

“Behold, giving, a man becomes,

Breeding joy by leaps and bounds !

So share with others all you have.”

¹⁰(Crazy **Lear** my pate did knock,

Raving mad on the savage heath).

On and on our Kavignar went :

“The Lord so great doth shrink and grow,

The Lord unfolds and worlds emerge

Like coiled spring that leaps to life !”

¹¹(“The earth is the Lord’s”,

I’d heard somewhere).

“Whatever you leave comes back to you

¹²Freedom lies in shaking off

Riches cumbrous, to the winds.”

¹³(**Morgan Forster** came to mind,

Riches made him heavy, he said !)

“Share and joy” said T. L. S.

¹⁴(Gospel truth of **Dean Harcourt** !)

N. K. Pillai caught it up,

¹⁵Pat with a couplet of Kural :

“Give” said Kavignar Sitaram,

¹⁶(“Datta”, **Eliot’s Thunder** said !)...

Our solemn conclave ended
When supper was announced :
Back we come to mundane things,
Our minds and hearts enriched.

Notes

1. The host was Thiru N. Kandaswami Pillai of Palli Agraaharam, near Thanjavur. He was a scholar of rare acumen.
2. 'Remembrance of Things Past', a series of volumes by the French novelist, Marcel Proust, embodying 'the conception of the unreality and reversibility of time and the power of sensation rather than intellectual memory to recover the past'
3. Antony and Cleopatra, iv, xiv, ii.
4. இன்று புதிதாய்ப் பிறந்தோம். (பாரதி)
5. Shelley's Ode to the West Wind : Destroyer and Preserver.
6. Cf Sir Richard Livingstone : "Education is what remains behind after we have forgotten what we have learnt."
7. சென்றதனைக் குறித்தல் வேண்டா. (பாரதி)
8. Shelley's Adonais :
"The one remains ; the many change and pass
Heaven's light forever shines ; earth's shadows fly "
9. From Edmund Burke's Speech on Conciliation with the American Colonies :
"Ye Gods, Annihilate but space and time and make two lovers happy "
10. King Lear : 11, iv, 33-36 :
Take physic, pomp :
Expose thyself to feel what the wretches feel,
That thou may'st shake the superflux to them
And show the heavens more just. "

11. I Corinthians x, 26. : 'For the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof '
12. St. Matthew, xix, 24. ' It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God. '
13. Edward Morgan Forster : From his ' Abinger Harvest ' : ' Property produces men of weight, and it is a man of weight who failed to get into the Kingdom of Heaven. '
14. Dean Harcourt, the wise old cleric of Lloyd Douglas's novel, ' The Magnificent Obsession '. According to him the secrecy of power lies in anonymous donorship.
Also Cf, St. Matthew vi, 3. ' When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth. '
15. " ஈத்துவக்கும் இன்பம் அறியார்கொல் தாம்உடைமை
வையத்து இழக்கும் வன்கணவர் " - குறள்.
16. T. S. Eliot's ' The Waste Land ' : What the Thunder Said : Line 401.
DATTA : " What have we given ? " Eliot himself says in his Notes : ' The fable of the meaning of The Thunder is found in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

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III

(THE TRANSLATOR)

One Whom I Love And Know

A Pensketch of T. N. R.— *Prof. T. R. Kuppuswamy Iyer.*

In my estimate of a character in literature my procedure is to delineate the 'without' before taking up the 'within' which is subtle. It is the person who meets the eye on the first impact. Who is not impressed with height as wedded to weight and prowess? Who is blind to well formed features? Show me the man who is not charmed by the pleasing colour of the skin? Do you call him quick-witted who fails to catch the light in the eyes of the sitter? Who misses to note the ripples that play round his mouth? How often have I wished that Desdemona had fallen in love with a man who, besides his sterling virtues, possessed an attractive exterior. Tell me not that beauty is but skin deep. My aesthetic sense needs to be fed on 'things of beauty'.

The person whose portrait I am trying to limn is near and dear to me. I hope, nevertheless, that my objectivity in treatment will not receive a setback by sentimental proximity.

He is not a stalwart, a six footer throwing dear me into the shade. He is of medium height. His weight is complementary to his height. As for his colour, it is golden. The gold wrist watch on his left hand, the gold chain in his right and the Orlando circlet with a fish pendant of the precious metal add little colour. They are in a sense lost on him, 'unnecessary additaments'! Speaking of this, a poet friend of his, once remarked that gold so merges in him that it is no longer noticeable.

This young man's crown is crowned with hair that is at once raven, glossy and wavy. His well-shaped nose and pearl-white teeth, jealously guarded by coral lips, pointed chin and, above all, his broad forehead decked with a vermilion smear mounted guard on either side by a watchful eyebrow lend magnetism to his looks.

It is very rare that the exterior harmonises with the interior; but my study offers in himself an exception, blessed

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ERRATA

<i>Page and Line</i>	<i>For</i>	<i>Read</i>
45, 2.	be Kshatriya.	be a Kshatriya.
49, 16,	faming	flaming
56, 36.	falliable	fallible
118, 17.	Visvavan	Vivasvan
118, 20.	Visvavat	Vivasvat



தஞ்சைக்குப்
பெருமை அளிப்பது

பெரிய கோவில்

தாம்பூலத்திற்குச் சிறப்பு சேர்ப்பது

லெக்ட்மி சீவல்

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முதலாவது உரிப்பாளர்கள் :

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